

POST-INDEPENDENCE CHANGE IN RURAL INDIA

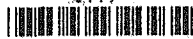
A Review and a Case Study from Uparhar Area of Uttar Pradesh

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Post-Independence Change in Rural India :

A Review and a Case Study from Uparhar Area of Uttar
Pradesh

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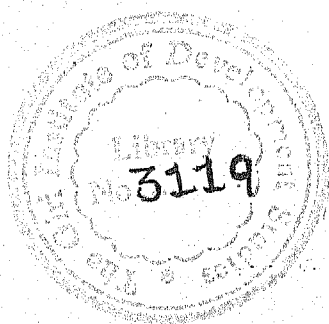
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P r e f a c e

Post-independence efforts in "developing" the Indian villages have, after the experimentation of 32 years, reached a stage where a serious effort at stock-taking is called for. This stock-taking should make it clear whether the linearity, quantum and speed of changes brought about so far is adequate, appropriate and satisfactory. If it is not so, as this study indicates, which other systems and programmes should be devised that would reduce exploitation, halt the process of underdevelopment and initiate and foster development. To do so, some penetrative analytical and diagnostic studies have to be undertaken to recommend appropriate policy prescriptions.

The present study was, in its original format, planned to be a major study which carried the analysis at three levels : village, family, and individual. Before undertaking such an ambitious study, however, I was 'advised' to make an exploratory exercise which reviewed the existing studies on social change in rural India and made a pilot study of one village. In accepting this advice, the empirical scope and coverage of the study had to be considerably restricted. It is precisely for this reason that many of the inadequacies of studies on social change in rural India, reviewed and identified in Chapter II, could not be acted upon in the empirical part. In fact, many critics would find fault with it on similar grounds.

In collecting sensitive information from the sample village, Rasoolpur, my contacts with large segments of its population extending over a quarter century came very handy. But for liberal assistance received from Shri J.N. Verma and A.P. Verma and many of my acquaintances it would have been impossible to collect sensitive information on many of the dimensions covered by the analysis. In using personalized contacts, investigative reporting, and ferreting out data from inter-connected sources on the same items, I have attempted to indicate to the research community the importance of these 'unconventional' methods. I am firmly convinced of the inappropriateness of some conventional techniques of data collection such as the personal interview with structured schedules in any penetrative evaluative study.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support extended by the Indian Council of Social Science Research in conducting this study and the personal interest evinced and encouragement given by its Member-Secretary, Prof. T.N. Madan. Many of the ideas discussed in the report emerged during many

stimulating rounds of discussions with my Faculty colleagues at the Giri Institute of Development Studies, in particular Dr. Radhika Ramasubban and Bhanwar Singh. Its quick prosecution was facilitated by the institutional support extended by the Director, Dr. T.S. Papola. Shri N.B. Bhatt and P.J. Devassy Kutty typed the manuscript and Shri A.P. Pandey managed the production of the report.

If the study succeeds in raising some important issues for the analyses of post-independence social changes in rural India and their implications for policy and programme formulation and designing of institutional structures for its development, I would consider my efforts suitably rewarded.

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Chapter - I

THE MECHANICS OF THE STUDY

Chapter - I

The Mechanics of the Study

Programmes of directed social change have been in operation since India became independent on August 15, 1947. Village social systems have registered changes as a result of their operation as well as working of the process of spontaneous change. The phenomenon of social change in rural India itself had been an area of research interest for an impressive number of social scientists. Their studies however, suffered from a number of errors of commission and omission. In generalized terms one noted that there was not even a single study which analysed social change for the entire post-independence period in a chronological and sequential manner. Such a study was needed to indicate the direction, quantum and adequacy of change which has occurred in the Indian villages. In an era when stock-taking was being done and programme formulation was being critically examined, the study might have provided vital policy options.

An ideal solution would have been to undertake a study which was devoid of past inadequacies and broke new conceptual, and empirical grounds. Much as it was desired to do so, resource constraints forced us to undertake an exploratory exercise first. If the results so warranted, a comprehensive study would follow thereafter.

Objectives and Coverage

Limited considerably in scope, this study, therefore, had the following specific objectives :

1. To review studies of social change in rural India in order to identify their theoretical and methodological inadequacies.
2. To make a pilot study of post-independence change in one village.

The main focus of the empirical part of the study is on the working of the corporate entity of the village as a social system and the changes which have been operative in the post-independence period due to the combined forces of directed and spontaneous social change. The aspects being covered are :

1. Nature and working of collective authority of the village.
2. Cohesion, conflict, crime and violence.
3. Development and deployment of system resources.
4. Nature of change in the production system.
5. Changes in the social structure.

In the empirical analysis the emphasis is on discovering the nature of change, processes and motivators of change and its consequences.

Methodology

As is obvious, the study has two parts : (1) review of studies; and (2) a pilot study in a village. The review is intended to be comprehensive but it is not expected to be a monotonous census of studies on social change in rural India. The pilot study is a historical study of one stru-

cturally complex village, Rasoolpur, located near the tehsil headquarters of Fatehpur in Barabanki district. Locationally, the village is in the Uparhar area, to the north of which lies the flood-ravaged Gaanjar region. The bench-mark of each of the aspects covered is August 1947. Changes recorded during the last 32 years have been reconstructed with the help of indepth discussions with a large number of village inhabitants, drawn from different strata of the social structure. Data collection has been made with the help of some unconventional techniques, including investigative reporting and teasing and ferreting out of information from inter-connected sources. Use of these techniques was possible because of the long standing contacts of the author with the sample village extending over a quarter century. Official data has not been entirely relied upon as its closer scrutiny indicated quite often its bogus nature.

Timing of events has been decided with the help of landmark events in each case and has been checked and cross-checked several times. The accuracy of field data, therefore, is likely to be greater than the officially compiled data, usually filed by dim-witted, unmotivated and ill-equipped government servants.

Change has been analysed only at the level of total village and not at family or individual levels. It is not our contention that the last two are inconsequential. However,

with the limited resources at our disposal, it was not possible to extend the coverage.

By its very nature, the study has been prosecuted to dig up issues and questions on which detailed study(ies) might throw more satisfactory light. Consequently, the findings of the empirical part have been used to pose issues and questions which have profound policy implications for the development of Indian villages.

Chapter - II

STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDEPENDENT
RURAL INDIA

Chapter - II
Study of Social Change in Independent
Rural India

As the Indian freedom movement was being waged under the amorphous umbrella of the Indian National Congress displaying the heterogeneous background and character of the ideologies of the main actors involved in the drama, it was more or less assumed that independence was going to be bestowed on the Indians sooner or later. An elitist diagnosis of the ills which afflicted the Indian society in general and its villages in particular had also emerged indicating the lines on which reconstruction of the Indian society was to have begun once the major task of winning the independence was accomplished (Desai : 1958; Misra : 1975; Ensminger : 1974).

While the entire leadership had made a public pledge of making an organized attempt to change the face of villages in independent India, some experimentation in rural development and reconstruction work had continued, spread over a span of many decades, in varied forms, in isolated, localized pockets.¹ Even otherwise, the British and, before them the Moghuls, had tinkered with the socio-economic-political-cultural ethos of the Indian villages rather drastically. Thus, even-though the community development programme, introduced in 1952, was

¹ Among these were : Tagore's Sriniketan (Dasgupta : 1962), Hatch's Martandam (Hatch : 1949, a), Krishnamachari's Baroda (Krishnamachari : 1962), Bryne's Gurgaon (Bryne : 1946, 1950), Gandhi's Wardha and Sabarmati (Kavoori and Singh : 1967).

the first large scale rural development programme which was expected to bring changes on the rural scene, the villages had been undergoing changes because of internal impulses and external stimuli all along. Only their intensity had increased and the direction and sweep assumed different dimensions in the post-independence period.

Analysis of social change in rural India has been - and continues to be - a favourite area for the social scientists, Indian and foreign, of different disciplinary moorings and even wider ideological orientations. That their analyses have added to the domains of knowledge of different disciplines is not contested. In the analysis which follows, it would be instructive to examine their claim of objectivity, analytical rigour, conceptual clarity, comprehensiveness of sweep, selection of data, interpretative neutrality, and prescriptive appropriateness. For, it is now being grudgingly acknowledged that quite a few of such exercises by Western scholars suffer from ethnocentricity, a slanted methodology, a purposeful selection of data, a strong tendency toward authoritarianism, an interpretative bias in favour of Western values, institutions and practices, and a conscious attempt to run down things Asian, and Indian (Goonatillake : 1978; Gupta : 1973). Indians themselves are open to pretty stringent criticism because of prevalent public ideology, dominance of the Western tradition and narrow social background of the social scientists (Saber-

wal : 1979). The depiction of the empirical reality has, thus, been less than satisfactory.

Post-independence political leadership certainly lacked enlightened political vision. The bureaucracy, basically British in character as it remained, insulated the system of governance and displayed lack of imagination and general system-based decisional inertia. Policy planning, programme designing, system operation, monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes suffered. While the politicians and the bureaucrats share this blame, the social scientists could not be entirely exonerated of the blame because of their misleading and, in some cases, false analyses of social change in rural India. This chapter would consider a few issues which are crucial to the analysis of social change in rural India in the fourth decade of the post-independence period. Discussion of the issues would be made through a review of the relevant literature on the subject.² It is different from earlier reviews on caste (Beteille, et al : 1958; Damle : 1961; Surajit Sinha : 1973; Sheth : 1979), Community Development and Panchayati Raj (Haldipur : 1974), cooperation (Mahabal, et al : 1975), administration of development programmes in agriculture and community development (Gaikwad : 1975), agricultural labour (Vyas and Shivamaggi : 1975), land

² This review is not a census of all the studies of socio-economic change in rural India. On the contrary, it is selective and concentrates on the major ones among them.

reforms (Joshi : 1975), scheduled castes (Sachchidananda : 1973), concepts and theories of change (Yogendra Singh : 1973 a) and rural studies (Chauhan : 1973) in as much as it does not generally highlight the findings : it is, on the other hand, dealing with the very motivations, conceptualizations, mechanics, methodologies, prescriptions and contributions, issues which make it clear, when juxtaposed to the findings, whether the conduct of studies had been a reliable, objective and useful exercise for the academics and the policy planners.

Study of Change : Value Neutrality

Social change is a very complex, multi-faced, and multi-dimensional phenomenon. The task of social scientists is to understand first its meaning and content before describing, for the benefit of the academics, policy planners and administrators, its nature, direction, causes, quantum, adequacy and consequences. Although it is not unusual to find studies of social change bereft of any theoretical/conceptual framework, the fact remains that conceptual clarity is basic prerequisite for any sound and penetrative analysis. Process of change has generally been described with a certain ideological slant although most social scientists do not make their ideological orientation very explicit in their expositions. It is our contention that various traditions of studies, while professing a pseudo value-neutrality, have offered a lopsided rendering

of empirical reality. These traditions are either rooted in the West, or in the Brahminical view-point of Indian society and have Weberian and neo-Weberian sub-streams. They analyse changes in the Indian society in terms of Christianity's irrationality, occurrence of evolutionary modernity only under the benevolent impact of the west, assess 'modernization' on the criteria laid down by an already modern Western society (Arora : 1968; Gupta : 1974), and conformation and deviance from the prescriptions and proscriptions contained in the ancient texts.

It is essential to give some specific examples to show that quite a few of these portrayals are basically inaccurate, and misleading since they ignore culturally relevant changes within the Indian tradition before the advent of external stimuli, and operation of the indigenous processes fostering modernization.

Major theoretical framework for these biased analyses of social change was provided by Max Weber (1930) where the ideal characteristic was located in the 'modernized' West (Protestant ethic and rationality) and its bipolar one found in the 'traditional' countries. Weber's schema was followed by Durkheim (1933 : mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity), Toennies (1940, 1955 : Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft), Becker (1957 : sacred and secular), Redfield (1955 : folk and urban), Parsons (1951 : pattern variables), Lerner (1964 : traditional

and modern), Merton (1961 : local and cosmopolitan), Riesman (1961 : tradition directed and other directed) and Rostow (1961, 1971 : traditional and mass consumption societies).³

What emerges from the accounts of these scholars is unimpeachable and clear preference for Western values (such as efficiency, diligence, orderliness, punctuality, decisiveness, rationality, participation, protestant ethic, materialism and independence) and Western institutions (such as nuclear family, democracy, and civic culture). Asian and Indian values (such as abstention, spiritualism, frugality, appreciation of leisure, tolerance and non-violence, and inherited respect for learning) and institutions (such as caste, religion, and joint family) easily and conveniently get portrayed as symptoms of backwardness and hindrance to entrepreneurship, development and modernisation.

In the enthusiasm to some how fit the 'data' to these hackneyed and biased theoretical descriptions, historical evidence from both the Western (industrial/urban) and Asian/Indian societies and their sub-cultures was conveniently ignored. It would be interesting to note what this tendency contributed to the emergence of particular conclusions via the studies pertaining to industrial/urban and agricultural/rural sectors. Documentation of such results pertaining to the industrial/

³ Clearly, this is an illustrative listing and with little effort it should be possible to swell its numerical strength to impressive levels.

urban sector could be seen elsewhere (Verma : 1979, a, b) :
in this chapter we concentrate only on the Indian agricultural/
rural sector.

Because of peculiar tradition of evolution of social sciences in India, there has been excessive concern with religion, caste, tribe, and family as system isolates. As a result, the relationship of these isolates with the issues such as class formation, class composition, intra and inter-class relations has been generally analyzed less rigorously. Wherever, these have been examined at all, the two (or more) sets have been seen as two or more separate sub-systems and the analysis has tended to focus their match/mismatch (Bailey : 1957, 1963, 1973; Beteille : 1965, 1968; D'Souza : 1967, 1969, 1978). Very rarely has the class structure of the village been taken first and the role of the systemic isolates analyzed in class formation and struggle (Shivkumar : 1978). Thus, it comes as no surprise when a Srinivas tends to be generally and excessively preoccupied with phenomenon religious and ritual (1952, 1960, 1962, 1965, 1976) and does not adequately explore the other aspects of social change; a Milton Singer who is hung on the relationship of the "little" and "great" traditions (1956, 1961, 1966, a, 1972, 1975); a Mandelbaum who finds change in the Indian society but very little change in its structure (1970); and a Yogendra Singh who makes Western stimuli necessary prerequisite of any stru-

ctural changes in the Indian society (1973). There are a large number of other, smaller, less known treatises which start with value-biases and predictably reach 'biased conclusions'.

Nature, Quantum and Adequacy of Change : Measurement Miasma

Measurement of change is a tough task to which very few researchers have addressed themselves adequately. In fact, there is hardly any agreement about the meaning of as widely used terms as 'development' and 'modernization'.⁴ There is one group of researchers, mainly among sociologists and psychologists, who have worked out what they call 'overall-modernity' scales (Inkles and Smith : 1975; Broehl : 1978) or other 'parsimonious modernity scales' (Fliegel, et al : 1968; Roy, et al : 1968, 1969). Construction of these indices/scales has been a very controversial area even on methodological grounds (Fliegel : 1976; McClelland : 1976) : there is even fiercier objection on the basis of value - preferences.

These scales generally include a wide array of items from different areas of human conduct and assign variable scores for acceptance/non-acceptance of new ideas/innovations/tech-

⁴ Definitions of development, underdevelopment, and modernization as given by Furtado (1971), Stewart (1977), and Frank (1967, 1969, 1975) are, for instance, drastically different than the ones outlined by the scholars following Weber. For incisive comments on the latter, see for example, Arora (1968, 1969, 1976), Desai (1975) and Gould (1969).

nologies. In this cock-eyed scoring system, acceptance of any new thing (idea, product, gadget, technology, procedure, etc.) becomes without any rhyme or reason an attribute of modernity. It is conveniently forgotten that it is also possible for the persons concerned to make such an approach which amounts to neither total acceptance nor total rejection of new innovations.⁵ Also glossed over is the fact that many of the new ideas, whose acceptance has been considered an attribute of modernity, have been subsequently proved to be hardly scientific and modern. Claims of some of these have turned out to be highly exaggerated whereas certain others have emerged as fakes. A certain amount of reliance on one's own experience with these new things before their 'adoption' is in fact a more modern attribute and yet, this healthy sense of cynicism and skepticism gets dubbed as sign of backwardness.

A second group of scholars - mostly anthropologists - have given qualitative labels to different types of changes. Change in rural India has, for example, been seen as 'recurrent' and 'systemic' (Mandelbaum : 1970), 'national and global-oriented' (Ishwaran : 1970), 'linear, evolutionary and cyclical' (Yogendra Singh : 1973), 'dynamics' and 'change' (Radcliff Brown : 1957), 'casual fluctuations' and 'replaceability' (R.K. Mukherjee : 1975), and 'accumulative', 'alter-

⁵ Bennet (1969), and Dewalt (1978, 1979) have, for example, provided excellent empirical studies showing social change to be more than mere acceptance or rejection of new ideas.

ative' and 'transformative' (P.N. Mukherjee : 1977).

As indicated earlier, measurement of the change has turned out to be highly coloured exercise in which the approach and methodology could contrive to give different qualitative and quantitative profiles of the same phenomenon. Measurement of informal leadership in the villages, for example, following the methodologies of Rogers (1962) and Dahl (1961) yielded one profile of their background and characteristics (Sen : 1971) : quite a different picture emerged when one used a different methodology (Arora : 1970; Verma : 1971a, 1972, b, 1974).⁶

An important dimension here was the measurement of different components of change dealing with information- acquisition, attitude and behaviour reinforcement/modification. However, measurement exercises of this nature involving the information- decision-action schema in the field, for example, of agriculture, health and family planning in rural India have been vitiated by the cultural bias of the measurement scales. Most of the scales measure Indian empirical reality through the Western criteria, their local validation notwithstanding. In cases where this has been a cross-cultural exercise (Roy, et al : 1968, 1969; Fliegel, et al : 1969; Inkles and Smith : 1974), the treatment of normative position in the West as the

⁶ This is equally valid for analyses of informal leadership of industrial/urban societies. Dahl (1971) on the one hand and Domhoff (1978) on the other, for example, depict different profiles of the civic leadership of New Haven.

empirical reality and its comparison with the Indian situation adds one more category of bias and untruth.⁷

Nature and linearity of change has generally been measured by identifying processes triggering change. Currently identified major processes of change include the following⁸ :

1. Traditionalization (Sanskritization, Cultural Renaissance, etc.)
2. Modernization (Westernization, Secularization, etc.)
3. Urbanization
4. Industrialization
5. Cultural drift

Identification of these processes has been made on the basis of (a) identity of change-inducing mechanisms (individual, group, institution); (b) linearity of change (judged on the basis of role-model values); (c) aspect/sector of change (social relations, modes of production, politics, religion and culture); and (d) unit(s) affected by such change (individuals, corporate groups, institutions, culture, social structure). The presence and operation of these processes is not questioned : what certainly is their exaggerated

7 Beteille (1969) and Berreman (1978), for example, point out the inherent flaws in the analyses of institutionalized forms of inequality in India and Western societies. While every one ends up in denouncing Indian caste system (which should be condemned no doubt), the institutionalized inequality practiced in Western societies on the basis of colour and race is conveniently glossed over.

8 Berreman (1970), Ishwaran (1970), P.N. Mukherjee (1977) and Yogendra Singh (1973) provide an interesting discussion on these.

claims to explain causation, sources, direction and independence of change inducing stimuli (Ishwaran : 1970; Parvathamma : 1978). There is also a tendency to view the operation of change inducing stimuli, internal and external, some how operating in isolation with each other. It is true that these stimuli are activated by different sources but at the response level it is the same set of village inhabitants which reacts to them. To that extent the strategies of planned change constantly interact with the strategies of spontaneous change, articulated, and operated on their own by the rural population. In the initiation of change or even in its absence the two strategies affect each other. This being so, it is fallacious to attribute the observed change in villages to only one of the two sets which is what most analyses do. Of course, one could justifiably identify the degree of influence exercised by various factors as the motivating forces.

Almost every study of social change ultimately touches, directly or indirectly, the issues of quantum and adequacy of change registered generally and in specific areas. This has been accomplished in two ways : one, where the quantum of change is described only via the qualitative labels i.e. high, moderate, low or appreciable, small, negligible etc. Most anthropological accounts belong to this category.⁹ On

⁹ Haldipur (1974) and Mandelbaum (1970) provide a good listing of these studies.

the other hand, there are others who use scales to measure change quantitatively (Sen and Roy : 1966; Sen, et al : 1967; Fliegel, et al : 1969; Roy, et al : 1968, 1969; Kivlin, et al : 1968).

The issue of adequacy of social change in rural India is concerned with the relationship of occurrence of quantum of change with the expected order of change. We have already noted that there is hardly any agreement among social scientists about the quantum of change registered : the expected order of change is even more controversial area since the perceptions of different scholars about the need of such change have varied a great deal depending upon their ideological orientations and methodological approaches. In general, scholars seem to be highly dissatisfied with the adequacy of change registered in social, cultural,¹⁰ and administrative¹¹ areas. Changes in agriculture and allied fields of production have been considered significant though only in specific geographical areas and in specific components.¹² The impression which one gathers from these accounts

10 See, for example, Dube (1977), Mandelbaum (1970), Singer (1973) and Yogendra Singh (1973).

11 For useful discussions, one could refer to Gaikwad (1969, 1970, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1978) and Kothari (1971).

12 An interesting assessment was provided by Swaminathan (1978), where he compared "our" and "their" agriculture. "Our" farming is based on smaller farms being cultivated either by the same or larger number of people utilizing renewable resources like animal dung (manure) and firewood. "Their" farming has larger farms being managed by fewer and fewer people, the farming system being heavily dependent on non-renewable resources like petroleum products (oil, gas, napatha) and coal which also pollute the environment.

is that although the quantum of change has not been adequate in many areas it is probably proceeding in the right direction.¹³ It is this assumption which is crux of the problem : for, it is open to question whether the direction of change in rural India is right after all. This becomes all the more obvious when the issue of direction and adequacy of change is linked to various segments of the rural society. It requires not much of scholarly acumen to realize that the exploited segments have not very much benefitted from the change programmes operated during the last thirty two years. For them direction of change has been far from right and most certainly not appropriate. It is also open to doubt whether a larger number of "changes" have really changed the basic content of relationships at all.

Causation of Change : Real and Contrived Motivators

Gandhi was one charismatic leader who attempted to build the myth of Indian villages being republics, self-sustaining in their functioning and virtually independent of other settlements in their existence. Despite nostalgia and romanticism, this view was hardly correct historically : in day to day operations it was down-right impractical. It was true, of course, that many a village was isolated : however, there were

¹³ One may not have any quarrel with the assessment of direction of change such as the one arrived at by Madan (1973, 1977) wherein he finds villages shrinking (extension beyond villages, increasing dependency on outside systems, increased penetration of outside agencies, networks etc.) and growing individualism.

in and outflows, human, material and cultural, which affected the life and system of production even in these isolated villages very vitally. Even if there was not much migration from these villages to outside places, outsiders (i.e. from the government officials to the traders, travelling sages and even beggars) penetrated the village social existence quite often. Changes in the villages were, therefore, caused by both the external and internal stimuli.

It is certainly true that the outside penetration in the villages, milder as it was during pre-Moghul period, increased considerably thereafter. However, a gleaning of historical accounts indicates that this increased penetration brought about changes of various types, dimensions and quantity because of the interaction of the external stimuli with the internal response pattern (Sharma and Jha : 1974). Weberian/neo- 3119
Weberian groups of scholars have, however, clearly stretched their arguments a bit too far when they state that basic changes in the micro-and macro structures of Indian society started taking place only after it came into contact with the West; that most structural changes during the pre-contact (with West) phase of Indian history used to be of an oscillatory rather than evolutionary pattern (Yogendra Singh : 1973 : 27). There is a clear over-emphasis on the change-inducing capacity of the external stimuli (especially originating in the West) and a biased under-estimation of the indigenous nature of

Indian response in these arguments. These analyses, therefore, discover generally adaptation and imitation (Singer : 1961, 1966, 1966a, 1972; Elder : 1959, 1966; Kapp : 1963; Morris : 1967; Cohen : 1973; Kunkel : 1971; Dumont : 1970; Rudolph and Rudolph : 1967; Mandelbaum : 1970; Frank : 1969; Gould : 1969 among Western scholars and A.K. Singh : 1967; Pandya : 1970; Khare : 1971; Tripathi : 1970; Shah and Rao : 1965; Misra : 1962; Dube : 1965; Loomis and Loomis symposium : published in 1969; Rao : 1969; Saksena : 1971, 1972; Sen : 1973; Yogendra Singh : 1973 among the Indians). Assimilation, adoption of new functions by the so-called traditional institutions and stoppage of a few old ones, and change in the structure of the society do not generally get adequate coverage.

The tradition of research in diffusion of innovations in the West and its subsequent extension in India brought in its train several assumptions in operation. Some of these were : the change stimuli should be channelized in the villages via leadership, external and internal (Coughner : 1965; Emery and Oser : 1958; Ensminger : 1972; Mayer, et al : 1959; D. Sinha : 1969; Taylor, et al : 1965); that mass media would play a revolutionary role in bringing rural change (Deutsch : 1953; Lazarsfeld, et al : 1955; Lerner and Schramm : 1967; Kivlin, et al : 1968; Pye : 1963; Rogers : 1962; Roy, et al : 1968, 1969; Schramm : 1955, 1964); that direct mass media exposure of the rural leaders, constituting the primary

audience, helped message spread to the secondary audience (Lazarsfeld, et al : 1955; Rogers : 1962; Rogers and Shoemaker : 1971); that there was no personal influence involved in the transmission of the message at the first stage from media to the leaders (Lazarsfeld, et al : 1955; Rogers : 1962); that the knowledge gap of the village population could be bridged with the help of mass media (Hornik : 1975; Hornik, et al : 1973; Rogers : 1974; Shingi and Modi : 1976; Shingi : 1979; Techner, et al : 1970, 1973) and that the task delivery systems in various fields of administration catering the rural population would act as change agents (Broehl : 1978; Dey : 1952, 1969; Mayer, et al : 1959; Sen : 1969; Sen and Roy : 1966; Verma : 1972, a, b, 1974, 1976, a). These generally originated from the West, especially the United States directly or U.N. agencies such as the UNESCO, WHO, FAO, the IBRD and the like dominated by the Western thought process, values and ideology. Using these assumptions, a succession of programmes of directed social change were launched in rural India with large scale 'assistance' also flowing in from the same direction. It started with the generalized programme of rural development, the community development programme. Intensive area (IADP, Command Area, DPAP), function (Nutrition, Cattle Development) and target-group based (SFDA, MFAL) programmes followed. Radio, first and television later were used to prop up the communication of these programmes, through the development bureaucracy, to the people (Agarwal :

1978; Agarwal, et al : 1977; Kivlin and Roy : 1968; Mathur and Neurath : 1959; Neurath : 1960, 1962; Menefee and Menefee : 1963; Roy, et al : 1969; Shingi and Modi : 1975; Thakur, et al : 1962-63, a; Verma : 1968, 1969a, 1970, 1971, a, b).

In the operation of these programmes, many of these assumptions proved wrong, and inappropriate. Almost every one discovered that leadership of the villages was helpful for inducing change only to the extent it was altruistic in its orientation. It emerged that in programme implementation the concerned administrative machinery had to go beyond the leader-follower dichotomy (Verma : 1971a, 1972b); that there was personal influence involved even in the first step of message transfer (Emery and Oeser : 1958; Heredero : 1977; Mathai : 1977; McLuhan : 1967; Mills and Arorson : 1965; Y.V.L. Rao : 1968; Sargent : 1965; Verma : 1972b); that the mass media instead of reducing the knowledge gap of the ignorant sections of the village population actually increased the same because of their initial lag (ceiling effect) and current inadequate access and exposure to the media (IIMC-IIC Seminar : 1979; Shingi and Modi : 1976; Shingi : 1979; Verma : 1969a, 1970, 1971); that there was very little participation of the people themselves in the programme planning and implementation (COPP : 1957; Gaikwad : 1969, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, a; Gaikwad and Verma : 1968; Mathai : 1977); that quite often the officials incharge of introducing change themselves acted

to be greatest single obstacles (Mathai : 1977; Srinivas : 1979; Wiser and Wiser : 1958); that the use of task delivery systems to their maximum capacity depended upon the organised status of its users (Moulik : 1978, 1979; Rutton : 1979; Hebsur : 1979; Verma : 1971); and that in the design of the change programmes sub-cultural perspectives and variations were essential to make them appropriate and effective (Ishwaran : 1970).

Periodical correctives followed in the form of one-shot participatory institutions (Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives, Farmers' Service Societies) and newer programmes (growth centres and integrated rural development, Mandi development, block level planning) from time to time. In accepting and introducing many of these programmes, the initiative quite often came from the Western scholars, agencies, and governments. In a few cases there was marked divergence in their real and stated objectives.¹⁴ In this divergence, lies buried the real story of articulation of the needs of the

14 To cite but one example. Much against the run of the mill objectives of the community development programme in India listed by many scholars (Dayal : 1960; Dey : 1962, 1969; Ensminger : 1972; Jain : 1967; Kavoori and Singh : 1967; Krishnamachari : 1962), the dominant objective in introducing it was to contain spread of communism. Chester Bowles (1954), who brought along the massive U.S. assistance for this programme, admits it much without fuss. It was also precisely for this reason that the Etawah model was preferred over the Nilokheri one since the latter involved organisation of the production and marketing systems of the beneficiaries, a mechanism which reduced possibilities of exploitation by the vested interests.

people, vehicles and routes for their realization and inter-play of the capitalist and non-capitalist ideologies. It is only now that the value premises of some of these programmes are being increasingly questioned even in India : they have already been flogged in the West.

During the same thirty two year period, another crop of experimental rural development programmes has been under testing by individuals, and institutions. Some of these deal with issues such as exploitation, hegemony, and sub-cultural variations of poverty and the solutions attempted vary from integrated cooperativization of production and marketing of an item (Anand Milk model, now being extended to cover oil seeds and cotton in Gujarat), to organization of the exploited communities (Raigars of Jawaja : Ravi Mathai : 1977 : Harijans of Sangli : Arun Chavan; tribals of Bihar : Shibu Soren; Bhoomi Sena of Thane), and organisation of a community around a mode of production but for alround improvement of quality of rural life (Mahatma Gandhi Cooperative Lift Irrigation Society of Dr. Gopal Reddy in Nalgonda). These experiments have profound policy implications for rural reconstruction and yet the social scientists in their change analyses and the policy planners in their choice of new programme, continue to ignore them.

Methodology : Scientific Pretensions and Practiced Imperfections

The foregoing discussion has, in ways more than one, reflected on the methodologies used by the studies of social change.

However, the ensuing comments would cover aspects which are generally included under the rubric of "mechanics" of research :

a) Barring a few studies (Panchanadikar and Panchanadikar : 1970; Sen and Roy : 1966; Sen, et al : 1967; Fliegel, et al : 1968; Hiramani : 1977; Oomen : 1972; Punit : 1977; Roy, et al : 1968, 1969; Kivlin, et al : 1969; Rao and Verma : 1969; K.L. Sharma : 1974; Sinha : 1969; Verma : 1970, 1971, a, b, 1972, a, b, 1974, a), the geographical coverage and numerical data base of most other studies is indeed very meagre. And yet, social scientists have proceeded to make sweeping generalizations about the society, cultural traditions, religions, communities, and castes, etc. It is not that these scholars are not aware of the complexity, diversity and variability of the empirical situation in different parts of the nation : for, they seldom fail to emphasize the same in their own descriptions. This general disregard for quantitative support, representative nature of sample and statistical validation of the hypotheses needed for definitive conclusions is to be traced to the naive belief that quality and quantity are two water-tight compartments in research; that in order to get quality in one's analysis one has to discard usage of figures

and numericals; that no qualitatively penetrative analysis could be made using large quantitative base. Whereas it is true that quite a few quantitative studies fail to attain high analytical standards, it has been demonstrated by many that this can be done (Arora and Lasswell : 1968; Arora : 1969; Kessinger : 1976; Gaikwad : 1971, 1977; Gaikwad and Verma : 1968; Gaikwad, et al : 1977; Lakshman Rao : 1968; Rao and Verma : 1969; Verma : 1970, 1971a).

b) In view of peculiar development of comity of social sciences in India, two tendencies have been witnessed : (i) an indigenous, Indian tradition of interpreting empirical situations has, barring a few stray cases (Gupta : 1974; Saran : 1959, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1969, a, b, 1971; Verma : 1970, 1971a, 1972, 1974), failed to develop; (ii) imported theoretical frameworks (i.e. Weberian, neo-Weberian), ethnocentrism and Brahminical views have coloured the interpretations of the field data. It is because of these tendencies that Mandelbaum (1970), despite an enormous review of village studies, fails to correctly analyse structural change; that Milton Singer (1973), despite his knowledge of and respect for Hindu religion, discovers compartmentalization between family and work organisations; that Dube (1977), despite his ability to present qualitatively impressive analysis of data, fails to give a factually correct social report of post-independence changes; that Srinivas

(1952, 1960, 1962, 1965, 1976), despite his acknowledged capacity of perception and abstraction, tends to over-emphasize the status emulation process (in-appropriately called Sanskritization) on the part of the lower castes; and that Yogendra Singh (1973) conveniently glosses over the contribution of indigenous processes responsible for modernization in the Indian society. Nor have those, whose credentials in dealing with quantitative aspects are impeccable, done any better on these counts. To give but one example, non-acceptance of "new" agricultural and other innovations by the villagers is seen by them as lack of innovativeness, their (villagers') sound reasons for not doing so notwithstanding (Fliegel, et al : 1969; Roy, et al : 1968, 1969; Kivlin, et al : 1969).

c) Absence of time-orientation and ahistoricism have contributed to equation of normative position with empirical reality and reconstruction of historical patterns of change on the basis of temporal evidence in majority of studies. The anthropological accounts generally proceed how, for example, a marriage ceremony takes place in a particular community at a particular place : it is very rare to find them also providing accounts of how many follow that ceremony and what changes have taken place in it, when and why. There is the magnum opus of Mandelbaum (1970) where he tries to reconstruct historical patterns of change at the societal

level by referring and reviewing temporal village studies of a large number of scholars from different parts of the country. He even goes to the extent of including a map wherein the geographical location of the village studies is indicated. The map, reduced on scale as it is, gives a misleading impression of the representative nature of the village studies reviewed. Several facts are glossed over : (a) cited village studies do not provide a representative sample; (b) they were not part of one exercise undertaken with one framework; (c) they were conducted by different scholars at different points in history; and (d) response pattern of the respondents could be different in different contexts. In Dube's compendium (1977) what various contributors have attempted to achieve is to record their own impressions about various sectors : Dube himself had taken the onerous task of offering generalized conclusions. It is very easy to conclude that X, Y, Z, has been observed and A, B, C, has not especially if one is also not required to present historical evidence. Yogendra Singh (1973) has re-interpreted and "put in a systemic frame" the interpretations of others in the Weberian framework. In this framework, anything indigenous has no claims for bringing structural change : it has been booked in advance for Western stimuli. System in his analysis - and that of many of his ilk - means only the Weberian/Parsonian conceptualization of a social system : delineation of systems

in the Marxian and other frameworks have no place in it. The Western stimuli has, according to him, produced modernization in the Indian society : it is quite another thing, that the historical evidence and historians are against this viewpoint. In general, it is very rarely that social scientists have combined the talents and methodologies of a historian and a social scientist (Ishwaran : 1970; Kessinger : 1974; Berreman : 1970; Newell : 1970; Saberwal : 1976) to provide analysis of change with time-place and cause-effect-consequences specificity.

d) A crucial issue in any study is the unit and level of analysis. The unit of analysis could be an individual, a group, an institution and a system : this analysis could be at macro, meso and micro levels. Although most studies of social change in rural India are quite definite about their unit of analysis, the same is not the case with the concept of levels about which considerable confusion exists. This confusion is not about what constitutes a macro, meso or micro level : it lies in the manner in which the level itself is sought to be studied. The depiction of the macro, meso and the micro is varied. The macro, as reconstructed by Mandelbaum (1970), is by piecing together of isolated and different points in history studies of a large number of scholars. One might like to ask : do they add up to make a macro picture? This is one end of the spectrum. Ranged at

the other end are Singer (1972, 1973) and Srinivas (1952, 1962, 1965, 1976) where the macro has been a blown up form of a micro area study. There are others who are located in the Indological stream and who have created the macro picture from the scriptures. There is very little doubt that none of these streams given the complete and real profile of the macro.

The micro profile has been presented by either considering the elements first and sketching their inter-relationships thereafter or depicting only the abstract/whole entity of the unit of analysis (i.e. a village). Only in very few of these the penetrations of external stimuli into them and their own extensions beyond their geographical boundries have been recorded. The significance of the internal and the external forces has, thus, not been properly indicated.

The meso as a level has assumed significance only after a realization dawned that the micro had limited use for generalization and prescription and the macro was quite often beyond one's capacity to study. The meso, essentially based in the sub-cultural perspective and providing enough elbow room for methodological details and policy applications, met the requirements. In marked contrast to the micro studies, the meso ones take a more comprehensive view of the working of the elements and processes of the system.

e) Before the Indian agencies (RPC, ICSSR, ICAR, ICHR, ICCR, etc.) started large scale funding of research studies, Indian villages and institutions were studied more by foreigners with the help of foreign funds. Their interest had periodic preferences and the Indians latched on to these 'leads'. Till very recently, these periodic interests swamped the research choices of many Indian institutions and scholars.¹⁵ As a result, some areas were over-researched in a particular manner (i.e. caste, family, diffusion of agricultural innovations) : there was inadequate coverage of certain other issues, phenomena which had crucial significance for the Indian people, their government and the society.¹⁶ Analyses of social change in rural India for the purposes of policy analysis and planning have begun only in the late seventies and their conceptualization, execution, and use very much remains open to conjecture even today.

Contribution of Research : Descriptive Adequacy and
Prescriptive Appropriateness

We finally come to the uses and abuses of the studies of social change. Before touching their descriptive adequacy

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of the phenomenon and its consequences, see, for instance, Verma (1967, 1969, 1974a).

¹⁶ For example, the withering of the village as a community, loosening of family authority, gradual brutalization of not so brutal wings of bureaucracy, emergence of dual society, despondency, defiance, violence and crime are some of the vital issues on which not many researches have been conducted. Peasant struggles are now being studied and as yet no analysis has been made of the resettlement of the villages for military purposes among the border nationalities (the Nagas, Mizos, etc.).

and prescriptive appropriateness, some related and, in our opinion, very consequential questions must be posed. These questions are : (i) what is the background (socio-economic-cultural) of researchers who have conducted studies in rural India? (ii) What specific areas have they studied and with what numerical vigour? (iii) What were - and are - the motivations in conducting the studies?

i) It is rather an interesting fact that no quantitative account is available which gives a break of number of studies on social change in rural India conducted by the British, American, European, Asian, Indian researchers : for, if one such record were available, it would make the following impressions assume a lot more credibility and force : (a) of the total number of studies on social change in rural India, a majority has been accomplished not by Indians but the foreigners;¹⁷ (b) among the foreigners, the number of those following only one particular ideology (i.e. capitalist) has been overwhelming; (c) among the Indians, a majority had very narrow social experience (Saberwal : 1979) and in particular the poor and the exploited have generally not been

17 This would be so inspite of the fact that there was some restriction on the impunity with which the foreigners, especially those from the elitist institutions, could conduct research in India after 1974.

involved (Joshi : 1979).¹⁸

ii) Recent reviews of researches (i.e. ICSSR Surveys) make atleast one trend very clear : certain areas have been showered special interest and attention whereas some have been comparatively ignored. For instance, even though inequality and poverty have been major issues to be tackled through the programmes of planned change in rural India, non-capitalist perspectives on them have been lacking. It is true that there are some lyrical and penetrative analyses of kinship, family, caste and religion. One would not be justified in saying that they are not insightful. However, it is a moot point whether these analyses should have been given preferences over the ones dealing with poverty, exploitation, inequality, social relations at work place and the like. As we shall see a trifle later, this has been a major contributory factor for absence of development-orientation in the analyses of social change : for, when the process of underdevelopment was not adequately analysed, how one could provide an insightful perspective on the parallel and inter-dependent process of development?

18 It would be useful to categorize the Indians into (a) those who are essentially based in India and (b) those who continue to be Indian for the sake of records and convenience. Another revealing question to ask would be : why the Indian students and scholars in foreign universities some how end up in studying only Indian research problems? Why, in other words, the western societies are not all that open to researchers from non-western scholars despite their advertized "openness"?

iii) There are two much talked about motivations for individual and institutionalised researches : to increase theoretical and empirical knowledge and to help the agencies in the planning, administration, appraisal and correction of planned programmes of change. Actually, however, in persuing these two objectives, a third motivation assumes dominance. This motive has something to do with hegemony, and exploitation with the help of expertise and scholarly work. At the back of many inspired and institutionalized research efforts has been the desire to acquire knowledge which had other uses for the sponsoring countries¹⁹ and promotion of a certain technological solution for which the inputs may have to come from the same direction.²⁰ It was possible to arrive at certain types of conclusions and recommendations because, as pointed earlier, certain approaches and methodologies, essentially based in Western values, were used to analyse Indian empirical realities.

What, then is the descriptive adequacy of analyses of social change in rural India? Without going in for a case by case verdict, we attempt here what could possibly be termed as a generalized assessment. In its totality, the coverage of

19 It is now revealed that the studies on virus and bacteria in India had uses in bacterial warfare.

20 The communication studies dealing with the radio first, television slightly later and satellite fairly recently aimed, among other things, indirect sales promotion of these technologies for use in India. In fact, as many a study on transfer of technology indicates, the imported technology was quite often obsolete, apart from being highly expensive.

these studies on the historical, geographical and topical dimensions is highly inadequate : it is also not impartial quite often. Even on topics on which the number of studies has been quite impressive, the analysis does not uncover the mystique of the phenomenon because of slanted methodology and approach. Excepting a very limited number of studies, most others lack what Srinivas has belatedly called 'development-orientation'. More importantly they reflect elitist views and have imbibed very little of peoples' own perception of their problems (Srinivas : 1979).

To judge prescriptive appropriateness of the conclusions and recommendations of the studies, it is essential to refer to some of the historical cases. The decision to launch the generalized programme of community development based on the harmony model was made as a result of, among other things, recommendations of a number of studies (i.e. Taylor, et al : 1967). The programme itself professed to develop the community but in its approach and implementation, the targets were atomised individuals; village leadership was used to channelize the programme. By 1959 its inappropriateness had dawned upon everyone. Whereas the proponents of peoples' participation brought in the cooperatives and Panchayati Raj, which later became legitimisers for the vested-interest, supporters of specialized (area, function, target group) programmes had pushed in programmes such as IADP, HYV, CAD,

DPAP, LCDP, IRD, SFDA, MFAL, FSS, etc. Each of these programmes was preceded by a study (or a number of studies) which recommended the course of action. It is now conceded that the IADP, for example, increased disparities and increased the dependence of the farmers on the non-agricultural sector (especially the industrial sector). The mere increase in per unit production did not bring prosperity to the majority of farmers since per unit cost had also increased. What is more striking is the fact that whereas the farmer could not exercise any control over price fixation of his output, the prices of the agricultural inputs coming into agricultural sector from the industrial sector were revisable at the whims and fancies of the manufactures and traders. Similarly, a whole new generation of institutions such as the FSS, rural banks, etc. has emerged under the weight of expert opinion and yet the 'change agents' have not changed the structure and content of generalized and specific target group-based exploitations and poverty.

Studies recommended that radio, and television (terrestrial/satellite based) would bring information and knowledge to the ignorant and needy. However, knowledge gap between the rich and the poor has not been bridged and the media, brought in the name of information transmission for the poor, have become means of prestige and entertainment of the elite.

Ever increasing outlays are being made available for various sectoral programmes in meeting the recommendations of 'social

indicators', and 'per capita expenditure' studies and yet, the horizontal spread of facilities has not improved quality of life of the rural population to any appreciable degree.

A new generation, born after independence, has graduated to adulthood phase and watched with amazing helplessness the emergence of unplanned change as a result of planned programmes. This generation - and the one that has followed it - does not have the same level of tolerance as its predecessor. It has seen emergence of the new breed of 'bura sahibs', leaders, and contractors pocket the major portions of the development outlays via various channels of leakages. It is somewhat more external-oriented and certainly better informed. Despite all its efforts at social mobility (Saberwal : 1976; K.N. Sharma : 1961), there are clearly outlined and felt limits on its mobility and success. As frustration has set in, some among this segment have taken to short-cuts in obtaining material means to lead the kind of life styles which they consider absolutely essential for themselves. Tension, violence and crime, which have been exploited to the hilt by the "modern-day" unscrupulous leadership, has erupted with surprising velocity, force, and serious consequences. While the politicians have played a leading part in this emergent schema, the researchers can not avoid blame for their failure to provide insightful diagnostic and objectively prescriptive studies of these phenomena. A new generation of scholars must make amends.

Chapter - III

FACETS OF CHANGE IN RASOOLPUR

Chapter - III

Facets of Change in Rasoolpur

The central concern of this chapter is to describe the changes which have occurred in respect of (a) collective authority structure of the village; (b) cohesion, conflict, crime and violence; (c) development and deployment of system resources; (d) production system; and (e) changes in the social structure. A brief introduction of the selected village, Rasoolpur, is, however, attempted first.

I

Rasoolpur : The Elementary Specifics

Rasoolpur's name gives an indication of its association with the Muslim Zamindars of Fatehpur, the headquarters of the Pargana block and Tehsil, located roughly almost two kilometers away. The adjoining village of Palpatan (which now team-up with it to form the Panchayat of Rasoolpur) belonged to the former state of Bilahara in 1947, and, thus, was a 'border' village.

The boundries of the village settlement on the south, west and north side have been provided by middle-sized ponds which dry up by the middle of April each year. The physical layout of households gives the main settlement a look of a quadrangle : the Chamaranpurwa, a post-independence graft, is an extension which resembles the figure of reversed L.

Apart from the locality of Chamaranpurwa, which is exclusively composed of the Chamars, the main village is a remarkable exercise in inter-caste and inter-religion mixes. There is not a single lane, bye-lane which does not have a mix of households from different castes. This pattern has survived the ravages of change during the last 32 years.

There were 59 households in 1947. Number of households has subsequently been increasing to touch the figure of 145 in 1977 and 158 in 1979 (Table 3.1). The increase is more marked among the Hindus than the Muslims. Among the Hindus, the largest block is accounted for by the Chamars. The growth of households among the Chamars is overwhelmingly due to immigration from a few villages located across the river Chauka, a tributary of legendary Ghaghra in the Gaanjar region. The terror of the Rajput-Brahmin combine in the Gaanjar region and open-arm invitation of Chamar relations in Rasoolpur facilitated this exodus. Four servicing castes which were present in 1947 no longer exist. Two each among these became extinct in 1961 and 1971 respectively due to natural causes (deaths/no births).

The dwelling units in Rasoolpur used to be almost entirely Kuchcha in 1947. The trend to make the houses pucca was started by three well-to-do Kurmis in 1953. It was followed by the Brahmins, Bhujwas and Ahirs. By 1979 almost all the Kurmi, about a third of Bhujwa, Brahmin and Ahir houses had

Table - 3.1

Number of Households at Different Points of Time

Households of Different Castes	Number in				
	1947	1951	1961	1971	1979
<u>Hindus</u>					
1. Brahmin	3	3	3	3	3
2. Kurmi	15	19	21	38	41
3. Ahir	1	2	3	3	3
4. Sonar	1	1	1	-	-
5. Barhai	1	1	1	1	1
6. Baksor	1	1	2	2	2
7. Pasi	6	8	11	15	15
8. Chamar	7	15	28	41	45
9. Teli	1	1	1	-	-
10. Tamoli	1	1	-	-	-
11. Kahar	1	1	-	-	-
12. Lodh	1	1	1	1	1
Sub-Total	39	54	72	104	111
<u>Muslims</u>					
1. Bhujwa	17	21	29	36	42
2. Nai	2	2	3	4	4
3. Teli	1	1	1	1	1
Sub-Total	20	24	33	41	47
Total Households	59	78	105	145	158
Population	272	301	439	669	721
Percentage Change (with the previous point of time)	-	32.0	34.6	38.0	8.9
Percentage Change (with the bench- mark base of 1947)	-	32.0	77.9	145.7	167.7

become atleast partially pucca. Now the biggest landowner of the village, Kirhi Ram, has three multi-storey buildings built in the heart of the village and the neo-rich family of Kripal is fast catching up.

Fatehpur-Baddupur road, leading from east to west, dissects the main and the Chamaranpurwa parts of the village on the north side. A bullock-cart track, starting from the north western part of the village, connects the village with the Fatehpur-Khinjhana road on the south side. There is another bullock-cart route to Fatehpur emanating from south-east side of the village. In-coming and out-going bus and train journeys are commenced from Fatehpur alone. No buses ply on the Fatehpur-Baddupur road, which is in a state dis-repair and remains out of commission during the monsoons and early parts of the winter.

Three major man-made changes have taken place in the topography of Rasoolpur since 1947. A drainage canal was dug in 1954 and it clears the water which used to accumulate in the lake located between the North-Eastern Railway track and the Fatehpur-Baddupur road on the north-east side. Rasoolpur had three major mango orchard areas belonging to the Fatehpur Zamindars. Between 1951 to 1961 these orchards were denuded and land brought under cultivation/brick kilns. A minor canal was opened on the western side of the village in 1973 but has become operational only in September 1979. The first

and the third of these changes were planned and brought about by the official agencies : the second was result of increasing pressure on land on the one hand and the growing bankruptcy of the ex-Zamindars on the other.

Farming was and continues to be the main occupation for a majority of the households. The Muslim Bhujwas were generally residents of Rasoolpur but their occupation was trading of farm produce in the neighbouring villages. They still practice the same occupation although their the modes operandi has undergone some changes.

Rasoolpur itself is located in the Uparhar region but interacts very actively with the Gaanjar region on the one hand and the urban system of Lucknow on the other. This interaction was clearly demarcated in 1947 with the Chamars almost entirely accounting for the exchanges with the Gaanjar region and the Bhujwas, Kurmis, Ahirs, and Brahmins interacting with the urban growth and flow impulses of Lucknow. Beginning in 1955 this trend has also undergone marked change. The interaction of the Chamars with their former native places remains but it has obviously weakened because of development of their marital ties in the Uparhar region itself. Also some among them came under the spell of a Harijan political activist, Rahi, operating in the garb of a Baba and this opened up their mental horizons and made their inter-action with the outer world possible.

II

Collective Authority Structure of the Village

Collective authority structure of the village in 1947 consisted of three components acting in close concert. These components were :

1. The Mukhia, who was hand-picked head of the village by the ruling Zamindar. Legitimacy for his actions was however, also available from the British government which ruled the province of Avadh;
2. An informal group of influential heads of households. Their influence was due to their access to land and/or large size of families;
3. The village Chowkidar who was a formal, part-time, employee of the local police station of Fatehpur where he performed duties of an orderly. The prestige to his position accrued due to his being the designated person informing the police about any acts of commission/omission which come under the purview of the Indian Penal Code.

In 1947, the penetration of the British system of governance in the social structure of Rasoolpur was but minimal. Being the sovereign power, the British enjoyed the right to govern almost any aspect of village activity they chose to do so. However, they had largely left this to be done by the Zamindars

of Fatehpur who, in turn, operated via the Mukhia. As a result, a large number of individual disputes, civil and criminal, were being settled at the village level itself by the collective authority structure. However, there were some occasions when the cases went up to the Fatehpur Zamindars and, in still lesser number of cases, to the British established courts. The collective authority structure of the village was an institution operative under both normal and extra-ordinary conditions. There were hardly any alternative levers of power which could dilute the enforcement of its will. As a result, the authority was obeyed and held in awe and respect by all segments of Rasoolpur community. It did not pay to disobey it : the penalty was too harsh and the only recourse left for the defaulter was to leave the village to avoid the wrath of the authority.

Because the collective authority structure was powerful, and had the commensurate clout to enforce its decisions, Rasoolpur inhabitants hesitated to commit deviant acts which would invite its intervention. Thus, the commission of deviant acts was kept in check.

In general, this collective authority structure was supposed to function objectively, and for the common good of the Rasoolpur village as a whole. In organising/helping to organise social, cultural, and religious activities it did function quite positively. However, as several of our elderly

village respondents indicated, it was not above board in settling civil and criminal issues.

The freedom struggle was a fight against the tyranny of an alien power. To the extent the alien power had developed and relied on internal (native) instruments to sustain its rule, the struggle had also highlighted the exploitation on the part of the latter. With the attainment of freedom in August, 1947, the aura of invincibility of the collective authority structure was broken. But a more telling blow to its writ came via the passage of the U.P. Zamindari Abolition Act in 1948. The Act knocked out the very legitimacy of the Zamindari system. At the village level, the institution of Mukhia lost its primacy and derivative base. The collective authority structure of the village, which had the ruling apparatus behind it, suddenly found that it had no legal props. Though it continued to exist in Rasoolpur, its teeth had lost its bite and viciousness. At about the same time, the Indian government opened new departments and started many new schemes. This increased the penetration of Rasoolpur social structure by the outside agencies. The area of operation of these schemes/departments quite often reduced the task-spread of the collective authority structure of Rasoolpur. In the aftermath of U.P. Zamindari Abolition Act of 1948 several land disputes from Rasoolpur, which would have been settled at the village level itself or at the most at Fatehpur, now

figured in the courts of the Tehsildar at Fatehpur, S.D.M., and other Magistrates at Barabanki. This increased the dependency of the litigants on the pleaders and a new category of persons called 'court witnesses'. Court verdicts had to be implemented with the help of police and in a few cases, local or even hired external toughs. This further eroded the credibility of collective authority structure. As a response gesture, the systemic pressure, which it used to exercise on the Rasoolpur residents and which had kept the deviance figures at low levels, got reduced. Increased deviance followed.

The old village Panchayat system constituted the collective authority structure in the pre-British period. It was systematically destroyed by the British. However, a somewhat modified version of the old village Panchayat system was reintroduced with the passage of the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act in 1949. This system formalized the informal collective authority structure and gave it a statutory base. Therefore, when Balla Pandit became the Pradhan of Rasoolpur Panchayat as well as Sarpanch of the Nyaya Panchayat under the new dispensation in 1949 he re-asserted the old authority of the Mukhia. Hamid Bhujwa recalled his 1953 case - of extra-marital relationship with one Chamar woman - when he was hung upside down with his feet tied in the drooping branches of the Banyan tree in full view of the assembled mass of the entire village. No one could dare stop this type of hair-

raising punishment. Balla Pandit's first tenure as Pradhan, between 1949-1954, could be considered very assertive phase of formalized authority structure of Rasoolpur in the post-independence period. However, the severity of fines which he imposed and the arbitrariness of some of his decisions came to be resented and several persons, on legal advice, refused to carry their cases to the village Panchayat and Nyaya Panchayat. Instead, they opted for the courts.

Balla Pandit did get a second-term (1954-1959) but the second stint was marked for its ineffectiveness in deciding issues and almost open flouting of his decisions, wherever arrived, by the concerned parties. During the same period the influence of outside 'brokers' in "fixing" cases and issues through display of muscle-power, treachery, and chicanery had assumed prominence. In cases where outsiders intervened, as in the famous orchard case of Badal Chamar of Chamaranpurwa, Balla Pandit's position was made to look hopeless. During 10 years of Balla Pandit's tenancy of Pradhan's chair organisation of social (i.e. marriage, etc.), cultural (i.e. Holi, Dol, etc.) and religious (i.e. Bhagwat, Ramayan Path, etc.) which used to be conducted with enthusiasm, gaiety and resource-support, gradually declined to a significant extent. He did not seek a third term.

Subsequently, the Pradhan's chair has been tenanted by members of Kurmi family of Chandrabhal. Pradhans from Chandrabhal family very wisely did not take up the judicial role from the very beginning : they only acted as the custodians of the Pradhan's seal and pocketed the benefits (such as issuing of slips for distribution of sugar). Of course, they have, between 1969-1979, discharged the statutory duties of a Pradhan but no leadership of the collective authority structure which has almost disappeared. Between 1968-79 a new phenomenon has emerged. It is the presence of cluster-based power brokers in Rasoolpur. Under this system one cluster is under the influence of an individual who, in league with similar types of individuals from the other clusters, exercises control over the entire village. This assertion of authority is pure power game in which the quid pro quo is more explicitly defined. Of course, there is no permanency in their positions and permutations of combinations have been changing with the time as well as issues.

Two recent events help in assessing the present status of collective authority structure of Rasoolpur. The first of these occurred in October 1978, when an unlicensed arms 'factory' was unearthed in Rasoolpur and 29 persons were hauled up for having purchased indigenous Kattas (Deshi revolvers) from this source. Almost every one possessing a pumpset was involved and knew fully well that a collective approach of the case would be beneficial. Yet, neither

those accused nor the Panchayat office-bearers nor even the power-brokers intervened. The issue was tackled at individual levels. The second case took place in October 1979 when the canal water was needed to save the standing Kharif crop from the drought. The digging of the canal, at a distance 6 kms. upstream, was organised by the residents of neighbouring village, Palpatan and over 250 persons from Rasoolpur participated. When irrigation water did come to the village, the villagers fought among themselves without working out a schedule of irrigation.

III

Cohesion, Conflict, Crime and Violence

Inter-mixing of houses of different communities in Rasoolpur has been a historical legacy which, as stated earlier, remains very much intact even today. However, extensions of physical-spread of the village settlement as have taken place in Chamaranpurwa and in the north-east portion in the post-independence period belong to only Chamar and Bhujwa castes respectively. Too much of discordant import need not be read in this development since, in the absence of freehold space available in the main part of the village, such extensions had to take place outside the already covered area. The important point here was that the notion of ritual pollution of different castes in the Hindu and Muslim castes, which generally forced different communities to have their somewhat segregated enclaves

in the villages, was not present in Rasoolpur. On the other hand, there was greater amity among most, if not all, the castes comprising the social structure of Rasoolpur.

This peaceful coexistence had undergone change vis-a-vis the Chamar caste since 1953 when, Rahi, a Chamar political activist, came to live and work among them. As a result of his constant brain-storming of the Chamars, the latter left many of the traditional Jajmani duties (such as carrying dead animals, preparing leather items in use in agriculture, etc.) and took to teetotalling, vegetarian habits. Apart from this, Rahi also integrated the Chamars as a primary exploited group which stood to gain politically, socially and even economically when working in close concert. As a result, the Chamars assumed a somewhat militant attitude toward other castes since 1955 and played key roles in the election of the Chandrabhal family Pradhans on successive occasions. However, since they lacked a solid resource-base - only three among them had significant amount of land -, they had to contend with the countervailing measures taken by the other castes (i.e. Kurmis, Brahmins and Bhujwas) whom they were trying to fight. In this conflict of interests, the Chamars could subdue the Brahmins decisively since the latter themselves were not cultivating their own land : they (the Chamars) could not affect the economic activities of the Kurmis and Bhujwas on whom they were dependent.

The Bhujwas of Rasoolpur constituted a significant segment

and their separate religious identity could have induced them to insulate themselves from the other castes. However, with the exception of one family, which is very orthodox in its outlook, all other Bhujwa families have opted for very cordial relationship with Hindu castes. This has sound economic logic behind it. It is significant to note that the Bhujwas themselves make their living by purchasing and selling the farm produce around Rasoolpur village. They also generally leased their land for cultivation to other castes. Economic gain certainly was contributory factor in deciding the line of peaceful coexistence adopted by the Bhujwas and yet, it would be incorrect to conclude that their own free will had nothing to do with it. If they decided they could have adopted a far tougher line vis-a-vis other communities in Rasoolpur and could have got away with it because of three important considerations : (a) they could have given their land to people outside their village for cultivation or alternately farmed themselves; (b) for their purchase and sale activities they were almost entirely operating in other villages; and (c) their own numerical strength was sufficient to enable them to hold their ground in any encounter with any single group of Rasoolpur. But they had decided to throw their lot with all other residents of Rasoolpur and that is what contributed to the communal harmony in the village.

In 1947 cohesion was reflected in the use of non-Jajmani and

non-wage help for economic, social and cultural activities in Rasoolpur. In farming, for example, the lift irrigation systems (the Baidi, the Garra, the Dhekuli), the sowing of Rabi and Kharif, the cleaning, cutting of cane and Gur-making, manure transfer to the fields, were operated with the help of Jitta system. Under the Jitta system, individuals A, B, C, D, worked, at one time, in the operations of one individual. On completion of the task of one person, a second one started work on his site and those owing him Jitta were counted and invited in. An elaborate count of Jitta days was kept with each family for each type of operation and got settled in turns. By the end of summer these Jittas were settled with the final act of transfer of manure in the fields. Bullock carts and pair of bullocks too were shared as were the agricultural implements. In the post-independence period as the traditional agricultural technology has changed, mutual help and cooperation, which used to be easily available, has disappeared in stages and got replaced by wage labour. The first to disappear were mutual help in irrigation as the traditional lift irrigation system yielded ground to pumpsets between 1952 to 1969. It was followed by disappearance of the cooperative Kolhu (cane-crusher) and its attendant mutual operations. Between 1969-1979 even the sharing of bullock carts and pair of bullocks and loaning of implements has also receded to insignificant levels.

In social ceremonies such as marriages, the expenses of the concerned individual were minimized with the help of contributions coming from the village community in 1947. These often consisted of grain, clothing, milk, vegetables, cooking fuel and vessels, apart from assistance physically in manual and other operations. A marriage in one family was an event which was treated as an event affecting the entire village and requiring joint efforts. During the last 32 years, however, this cooperation has undergone significant changes, although the event even now is not solely concerned with one individual. Between 1947-1959, the contributions in the form of grains, clothing, and vegetables got reduced : 1959-1969 saw elimination of assistance of fuel wood : 1969-1979 have even reduced the physical assistance by others. The marriage is a village event now only in its token form and an event of crucial significance for the concerned family and its friends/ close associates (not necessarily from the same clan or lineage).

The Kandhayya Dol, (Janmastami in which the new-born Krishna is ceremonially taken out in procession), Holi, and Bhagwat etc. used to be celebrated with gusto and enthusiasm in Rasoolpur in 1947. All these events were total community events although the localised organization of rituals in each case was performed at traditionally known places, in most cases the residences of most ardent devotees. Specific roles and responsibilities came to be very articulately defined

through custom, practice and tradition. A specific group of great enthusiasts assumed special duties whereas the entire village participated in them. The expenses incurred were distributed among the village residents depending upon their economic capacity to pay as well as the interest taken. The celebration of Dol ceremony stopped after the death of Sarjoo Sonar in 1959 at whose residence it used to be organised and who took avid interest in its proceedings. It was not that the Dol could have not been organised at some one else's place : the main issue was waning of the participatory interest by the Rasoolpur community.

The organised process of carrying the colour-sprinkling and "Holiyaeeing" (i.e. ceremonial ragging) in Holi celebrations had assumed vulgar forms by 1963 in which the womenfolk were tending to become hapless victims. This was not only resented by decent individuals/families : it was actively opposed. As a result, Holi became a matter of individual celebration and its community character evaporated. Bhagwat Katha was initiated previously at the initiative of the entire village : only its site was kept at the residence of Balla Pandit. After 1964 this is no longer a village ceremony. On the other hand, it is now occasionally (not regularly) organised at the expense and initiative of one family in which only the devoted few contribute. Attendance in all such functions has dwindled. It swells only on such occasions when it also has some other concern(s) in mind.

Conflict between individuals has occurred frequently in Rasoolpur as it does in most other villages. The usual cause for such conflicts used to be Zar (money), Zoru (woman), and Zamin (land) in 1947. Since 1958 a new category has been added to this list : it is plain and simple jealousy which now acquires vicious forms. These individual conflicts have not been probed here in detail since this study was generally concerned with the corporate profile of the village. Inter-caste conflicts have occurred only figuring the Chamars on the one side and the Savarna castes (Brahmin, Kurmi, Ahir) on the other. As indicated earlier, this conflict generally involved status improvement efforts by the Chamars and in doing so they invited the ire of Savarna castes. On a couple of occasions when these conflicts involved the Chamars and Brahmins, as in 1963, 1968, 1972, they almost culminated in open physical fights. However, interventions by the Kurmis and Ahirs prevented any blood-shed. Some court cases involving these two castes over land inside the village settlement did get instituted but eventually got settled outside. These conflicts had direct relationship with the physical presence of Rahi, the Chamar activist, among the Chamars in Rasoolpur. However, his numerous amorous relationships with many a Chamar woman and girl, eventually led to his severe assault on one occasion, in 1971, by a Chamar lad and disappearance from the scene subsequently. The Chamars have not been the same militant bunch ever since. But, then, they have not restarted their traditional services to the Rasoolpur community either.

Rasoolpur is not known to be a village full of criminals. And yet, it is not that it lacks deviance, crime and violence. Deviance and crime in Rasoolpur could not be adequately and appropriately described and assessed until and unless they are properly categorized into neat analytical categories. Dis-regarding the frameworks used by others, we would group these into : (a) Observance of social norms, (b) sexual relations, (c) person, (d) property, and (e) economic activities.

Observance of social norms of behaviour in a particular manner was intended to keep the basic theodicy of the Hindu and Muslim religious structure and values. Of the castes belonging to two religions in Rasoolpur, changes have occurred more significantly among the Hindus. The observance of birth to death rituals among the Hindus is no longer what it was prescribed under the Sanskrit texts or even practiced in 1947. The sequence of these ceremonies was : Janm and Namkaran (birth and naming), Mundan (ceremonial shaving off hair), Upanayan (the taking of Janeyu, the sacred thread), Panigrahan (marriage), Swargwas (death), Daswan, Terhi and Turpan (death and offering of Pindas). Of these, only the Panigrahan and Daswan, Terhi and Tarpan are now being performed and the rest have been given up without much a do between 1947-1958. The motivating factors behind their dis-continuance have been the crippling nature of expenses and a certain realization that the Brahmins had literally left nothing to chance to exploit the innocent people under the garb

of performance of religious rites. The Brahmin used to enjoy overbearing influence in 1947 and before for the simple reason that he was a Brahmin and, thus, a legitimizer of all watershed events in an individual's life. This fictionalized myth no longer exists in Rasoolpur. The Brahmin is not treated universally superior being now even though he continues to be used in a few ceremonial events. He has consequently been put on the same pedestal as many other Savarna castes. Since their economic status is not anything to boast about, now the Savarna castes even make fun of the Brahmins. The celebration of rituals and rites among the Muslims of Rasoolpur has, however, not changed as much as those among the Hindus. This is due to the fact that the Muslims, as a religious group, are far more orthodox in observing their tenets. Of course, not many offer Namaj five times a day as prescribed by the Quran. The nature of change which has come in their religious behaviour relates to a marked decline in the number of 'optional' ceremonies (such as the Milad and Dahe).

In the performance of rites and activization of relationships between different sets of individuals, males, females and children, in a family and across the social structure of both Hindus and Muslims, 'deviations' set in the early fifties. The Karta in a family enjoyed tremendous authority in allocating/relocating its resources in a manner he considered most appropriate. The actual exercise of this authority

quite often resulted in favours being shown to some. The tainted exercise of this power began to be questioned quite openly between 1947-1968 and between 1969-1979 several Kartas were over-thrown, breaking the families in the process. Also affected were the excessive respect required to be given to the elders irrespective of the issues and opinions involved. During the same period, the opinions of all adults in the family got somewhat greater weightage leading to a marked lessening of the importance of the elders. An important contributory factor in these developments was the ability of the concerned individuals to manage economic gains for the family.

Sexual deviations in the social structure of Rasoolpur have been almost axiomatic because of historical and structural reasons. First and foremost, the Hindu and Muslim proscriptions in relations to marriage are poles apart. Quite a few Muslims in Rasoolpur married in their own families and this was not lost sight of by non-Muslims. Second, quite a few among the Kurmis were what are termed in this cultural

region as Amnaikhs¹ : only a few were Zimidars.² Many among the Amnaikhs could not get married and, as such, the sex-ratio was adversely affected. Their sexual desires remained unsatisfied. Third, the Chamars and Pasees constituted quite a sizeable segment of Rasoolpur population and sexual relations among them had always been quite lax.

The cumulative impact of the foregoing structural conditions on the sexual relations of Rasoolpur population has been to make them generally much more broad-based, less-shackled and more adventurous even in 1947 than in any other comparative village of its size. Sexual 'deviations' in 1947 displayed the following patterns : (a) A larger number of out of wedlock sexual relationships had females from the lower castes; (b) more of adults than the adolescents were involved in them; (c) a few 'regular' and widely known (and even accepted)

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- 1 The division of Kurmi caste into Amnaikhs and Zimidars was based on the notion of so-called extra purity (Kulinita) of the Zimidars. Among the Amnaikhs, there were two specific sub-types : (a) ones having the following "impurities" : (i) keeping of widowed woman as a wife; (ii) a concubine; (iii) unmarried motherhood; (iv) offering of girl, in marriage, at bridegroom's place; (v) a cross marriage (A and B marrying the sister of the other); and (vi) occupational work by the womenfolk; (b) the ones not having any impurities. Common feature of all Amnaikhs was that they did not belong to the privileged flock of Sarhe Baara villages of the Zimidar group. The Zimidar was supposed to be a descendent of the original Kurmi families of Sarhe Baara (12½) villages, falling in Barabanki-Sitapur districts. These villages were: Nammopur, Siyarpur, Khallapur, Choorepara, Manpur, Meera-nagar, Taalgaon, Sarhemau, Gursel, Nanmau, Harakh, Barauli, and Danialpur. Within the Sarhe Baara group ranking existed and dowry amount was positively and significantly related with the rank.
 - 2 The term Zimidar should not be confused with the one called Zamindar. The latter referred to those owning land and property.

relationships (as for example, the one involving the Sonar and a Kurmi woman); (d) intra-caste cases, especially among the Chamars, Kurmis, and Bhujwas, constituted quite a large number; (e) quite a few cases of incest (particularly involving father/uncle in-law-daughter-in-law, elder-brother-younger brother's wife). Between 1953-1979 these patterns have been transformed to : (a) somewhat normalized distribution of out of wed-lock sexual relationships among different age-groups; (b) very widespread presence among all castes; (c) increase in the 'regular' relationships; (d) greater tolerance of open and long-lasting sexual deviations of "revolting" nature (i.e. a Fatehpur Muslim-Brahmin woman; a Bhujwa-Chamar woman); (e) participation of outsiders in sexual sessions with some ravishing beauties of Rasoolpur.

Crimes against the person and property have been on the increase in Rasoolpur. Between 1947-1979, three murders took place. One of these was committed in 1969 when a Harijan Baba, belonging to the village and living on the north-east side of the village, was done in. The popular belief made it a case of wilful murder by his own relations in order to obtain his land and property. The remaining two murders were of two Chamar brothers in 1974 which again were an 'inside family job'. Between 1947-1979, a total of 132 thefts, minor and major, had been committed (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Table - 3.2

Number of Thefts Committed in Rasoolpur

Serial Number	Period	Number of Thefts	Percentage
1	1947-1957	28	21.2
2	1957-1967	36	27.3
3	1967-1977	31	23.5
4	1977-1979	37	28.0
Total		132	100.0

Table - 3.3

Thefts in Rasoolpur by Castes

Serial Number	Caste	Number of Thefts	Percentage
1	Kurmi	42	31.8
2	Brahmin	14	10.6
3	Bhujwa	39	29.5
4	Ahir	12	9.1
5	Pasi	4	3.0
6	Chamar	16	12.1
7	Sonar	3	2.2
8	Nai	2	1.5
Total		132	100.0

Formal report of quite a few among the 132 thefts was not lodged with the Fatehpur Police circle since murders and thefts were seldom solved by them. There were, on the other hand, occasions when the victim himself was locked up and was made to 'cough up' bribes to the police officials. In the recent years, it has become almost an accepted practice in Rasoolpur not to lodge a report with the police if this could be helped. However, since the sense of insecurity, of both person and property, has greatly increased due to increased incidence of such crimes, aided and abetted by the thieves/dacoit - politician - police triumvirate, some counter-measures have been taken by the Rasoolpur population. First, the practice of keeping harvested produce in the Khaliyaan unguarded has ended as has the habit of keeping agricultural implements and other domestic and other items outside one's house. Between 1969-1979, even the costly cattles are no longer tethered outside as they are lifted by organised gangs which use trucks to whisk them away. Second, sleeping on the cots outside one's residence, once universally practiced, has almost disappeared. Third, keeping semi-permanent assets such as pump-sets etc. at the fields has also been discontinued or wherever it still remains an armed guard is certainly kept. Fourth, purchase of licensed guns by a large number of well-to-do-farmers and unlicensed Kattas has come in vogue by literally 90 per cent of the population for self-defence.³

³ That this was a fact was demonstrated by unearthing of as many as 29 Kattas in a raid organised by the police in 1978.

The largest increase, however, has been in economic crimes, crimes involving fraudulent cornering of land, property and money in recent years. Alienation of land belonging to the Chamars and Bhujwas surreptitiously by Chandrabhal and Kripal families - the ones which have registered fantastic economic growth during the last 32 years - was accomplished without much notice since the Pradhan himself came from the first family and was one of the main beneficiaries. The third big landlord, Kirhi Ram, too cornered land of a widow through clever moves. Only the land of the Bhujwas was purchased in somewhat open manner. The farming castes as a whole are known for their propensity to amalgamate the nearby fallow - but cultivable-land but wholesale absorption of Gool (water channels), Galiyara (bullock-cart track) and Panchayat lands in an organised manner took place after the consolidation of holdings, carried out in 1965-1967. Properties (houses, stalls for cattle, orchards, etc.) belonging to some Fatehpur Zamindars and even some Rasoolpur residents by some families took place between 1962 to 1964. There have been a large number of cases involving monetary transactions too in which people have been cheated. One notable pattern of all these economic crimes has been that the gainers have mostly been the wealthy and powerful and the losers the weak and helpless. The officials of revenue, police and other departments have played their significant parts in all these conspiracies in return for illegal gratification.

IV

Development and Deployment of System Resources

System resources in Rasoolpur could be grouped into : (a) human; (b) animal; (c) physical; and (d) economic. Human resource consisted of demographic stock which made available human energy, employed to manage economic activities. It also included social capital (i.e. norms, values, occupational skills, etc.) which are transmitted, as a part of the socialization process, from one generation to another. As already indicated (Chapter I), population of Rasoolpur has been increasing during the last 32 years. What has not changed significantly is the structure and content of the social capital. No new occupational skills have been added to the number that already existed in Rasoolpur. On the other hand, with the death of the Sonar, the Teli and Tamoli, the skills associated with these occupations have ceased to be available in Rasoolpur.

Farming and trading in food-grains are the two major occupations in which over 80 per cent of Rasoolpur population is engaged. The first of these would be separately discussed. Trading in food-grains has been the mainstay of Bhujwa lives. Traditionally, this system has so developed that it required only keeping of a horse - for transporting the purchased item(s) - between two operators : not much liquid capital was

needed in trading. This was because of the fact that the Bhujwas conducted their trade in the nearby villages where they were fairly well-known. It was, therefore, possible to bring the purchased grain to Rasoolpur or to the grain market of Fatehpur without making a down payment right at the time of weighing. The payment to the producer was made after the purchased grain was sold in the market. The time gap between the two transactions quite often was as long as a month. This system was prevalent in 1947.

Its substance very much remains unaltered even today except for the fact that the emergence of some unreliaables among Rasoolpur Bhujwas has made the producers somewhat choosy about the purchasers. In case the bonafides of the trader are not beyond doubt, he may have to make cash payment while completing the purchasing transaction. The use of horse has also been reduced somewhat because of its high initial cost and, thereafter, costly maintenance since 1958. The cycle has come to be used as a substitute. Between 1964 to 1971 some of the Bhujwas started carrying grains, in trucks, to Lucknow and Kanpur Mandis but intermittent changes in the food grain trade rules in U.P. forced them to fall back on their age-old Fatehpur base. Until 1959, the Bhujwas also used to purchase Gur and market it in Barabanki and Lucknow. The inroads made in this segment by the Kurmis on the one hand and decline in Gur-making on the other forced them to drop

this item altogether after 1962-1963. The only notable event in their trading operations after 1974 has been the establishment of a rice-husking mill by M/s Mata Parsad Bhuraamal, the Agrawal trading family of Fatehpur. Four of Rasoolpur Bhujwas now act as some kind of purchasing agents of paddy for this rice mill. The arrangement suits them although the unit margins are decidedly low. They, however, make it up via huge turnover and free availability of Bhoosi (i.e. skin of paddy) from the rice mill which their horses consume with relish.

Education, as a medium of occupational mobility, has so far benefitted only a Brahmin and four Kurmi families. The three Brahmins from Balla Pandit's family are respectively working in Police (Head Constable), Revenue (Lekhpal) and Medical (Ayurvedic Physician) departments. The four white-collar employees from Kurmi families are Primary School Teachers, Lekhpal and Post and Telegraph Inspector. The Brahmin family provided the lead and got these positions almost entirely because of its contacts with outside individuals. Two Kurmis, on the other hand, have got these positions on their own merit and without help from any quarters. The remaining two Kurmis - Primary School Teachers - got their jobs with the help of a Chowdhury from Gursel. More Kurmis are now building contacts which would be useful for their next generations. Three Chamars, who started working as casual workers among the gang-

men of the NER, Fatehpur in 1967-1968, graduated to the status of regular gangmen in 1972 and are treated as 'better off' persons among their caste.

The animal wealth of Rasoolpur consisted of a substantial population of goats, pigs, and cows in addition to the bullocks and buffaloes. The distribution of goats, pigs and cows was somewhat caste-specific : the goats were mainly with the Bhujwas, the pigs with the Pasis and the cows with the Ahirs. Only bullocks and buffaloes were common to most farmers belonging to various castes. Cattle stock was of low quality with the minor exception of six big Kurmi families which maintained improved varieties. Between 1947-1979, the cost of the cattle has appreciated more than 400 per cent and now a good buffalo costs Rs.2,500, a bullock Rs.2,000, a cow Rs.1,200, a goat Rs.500, and a pig Rs.450. Maintenance costs have also appreciated and availability of dry feed (usually Bhoosa and Payaal) has decreased with the appearance of dwarf varieties of wheat and paddy. Shrinkage of pasture land, and area under sugar cane has decreased availability of green fodder. Animal population of Rasoolpur has consequently come down between 1967-1970. Another noticeable feature is decreasing use of animal energy in farming and allied occupations. Quite a few operations which were previously being done with the use of animal power are now accomplished mechanically. All these developments have escalated the cost of production of goods and services.

Physical and economic resources consisted of land, houses, roads, irrigation and drinking water, and orchards. Rasoolpur has yellowish alluvial soil which is fertile. The terrain is flat and rainfall quite satisfactory. Roads and bullock-cart tracks, if properly developed and maintained, would have made Rasoolpur a very well connected village with the surrounding region. However, the successive Panchayat Pradhans did not take any initiative in this respect. Construction of the Fatehpur-Baddupur road, in any case, can only be taken up by the Public Works Department. The sleeping engineering bureaucracy of the Department can only be raised from the slumber by the aggressive approach of an influential activist with high political connections. The Pradhans have not even taken up the brick-laying of the lanes and bylanes inside the village settlement for with the Panchayat Department was, during the early phase of Community Development Programme (i.e. 1952-1959), giving considerable amount of grant. Between 1947-1979 the width of many of the lanes has been drastically reduced by the never-ending encroachment of the settled population. Circulatory problems have consequently cropped up.

Drinking water was not available to the Chamar and Pasi families in 1947. They used to wade through chest-deep water, accumulated in the cart-track between the main village and Chamaranpurwa, to fill their pitchers from the well of a

Sonar. Construction of two wells between 1952-1962 with the help of government grants has, however, eased their problem. During the same period, most well-to-do families have installed hand-pumps. Existing wells are now used for bathing, washing and watering the cattle-feeding stalls. The three ponds on the south, west and north sides of the village and a distantly located lake served as storage of irrigation water in 1947. Now these tanks do not serve irrigation purpose. A minor canal has become serviceable in September 1979.

Rasoolpur used to be surrounded from all sides by very dense mango orchards of Tukmi variety. As stated earlier, these were denuded. But before the consolidation of holdings started in 1965, most people having fertile Goend (near to the village) land planted mango orchards of the Kalmi variety. Between 1965-1979 these have become fully grown. The mango crop of most of these orchards is, however, sold outright to the fruit-venders of Fatehpur since it yields good returns and also because of the fact that it is difficult to guard the same from the local population. In spite of development of these Kalmi orchards the fact remains that present area is not even one fourth of the area which used to be under Tukmi mango orchards earlier on.

V

Production System

Apart from trading in grains which is the main economic activity of the Bhujwas, farming constitutes the only other major production system which sustains the economy of Rasoolpur. In the following analysis after describing its 1947 profile we would be mainly concerned with the nature of structural changes which have taken place in Rasoolpur farming. Detailed cataloguing is not attempted : only major patterns are highlighted.

1947 Profile

Farming in Rasoolpur conformed to what Swaminathan (1978) calls 'our agriculture' in which there was a working equilibrium of human skills with the ecological system. The seeds were locally produced and remained available with every individual farmer. The seeds were not prone to diseases and were not required to be replaced every third-fourth year. The output from the farms was absorbed on the farm, or in domestic uses for the human beings and animals. To give one example, wheat was eaten as a cereal by the Rasoolpur population as a principal item of diet : its Bhoosa was eaten by animals and its Kathura (lower part of the stem which is very hard and can not be converted in to Bhoosa) was used for slow-heating of the milk.

The instruments needed for agricultural operations were locally made with the help of Barhai (woodsmith), Lohar (the blacksmith), Baksor (the bamboo basket maker), Chamar (cobbler), the Kumhar (potter). Their servicing too was done locally and the first two among these traditionally skilled craftsmen worked over-time, in extra-sessions during busy Kharif and Rabi seasons so that the farming operations did not suffer. These service men also offered their special services on the ceremonial occasions.

Animal and human energy was used in maximum number of operations. The bullocks, for example, were used for ploughing, levelling, sowing, irrigating, threshing, transporting inputs, produce and other items. The humans used their energy in every agricultural operation including such operations where their energy was the sole input for activating the systems.

Farming as a technical sequence of operations is quite a complicated occupation and over the years the Rasoolpur population, especially the Kurmis, had developed a wide repertoire of indigenous knowledge and skills in carrying out farming. This knowledge and skill enabled the farmers as individual decision-makers to respond to the needs of three sub-systems : (a) their family, (b) their farm, and (c) the Rasoolpur and outside world. Individual farmer's success very much depended upon his ability to develop and deploy resources of his family and his strategy of managing his farm and his relationship with Rasoolpur residents and outsiders.

As already indicated (Section II), farming conducted as a single family enterprise, was, in its operational form, a cooperative and joint enterprise in which one farmer assisted a number of others. Those not owning land but working as wage-labour developed special relationships with some families on whose farms they normally worked. Farming was, thus, a way of life in which various segments of Rasoolpur society were integrated without any formalised order to that effect.

Post-Independence Changes in Farming

Rasoolpur farming has changed as a result of programmes initiated under the Grow More Food campaign, Community Development Programme, and High Yielding Varieties Programme, respectively and approximately reaching Rasoolpur farming community in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. The extension officials have admittedly played a useful role in the transmission of new ideas and technology but the response behaviour has also been influenced by the self-obtained knowledge, observation and experience of the Rasoolpur farmers. It would be naive to label the changes which have been witnessed in Rasoolpur farming as simple 'acceptance' and 'rejection' of new ideas and technology : for, the changes are not necessarily uni-linear, dichotomous, simple affairs. They are far more complex and diverse. Instead of assigning categories to these changes, we would rather describe the nature of these changes in specific terms.⁴

⁴ Changes in the irrigation pattern have already been touched upon and would not be repeated here.

Relative Freedom to Dependency

In the use of seeds, Rasoolpur farmers have obviously increased the number of their options. Among the principal crops, wheat and paddy, some traditional varieties known for their nice smell, good taste, and disease-free existence have been retained along with the adoption of newer varieties developed at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and Pantnagar Agricultural University.⁵ The general pattern of ratios between the traditional and the newer varieties is 40:60. The output from traditional varieties is retained for home consumption : surplus from the newer varieties is sold in the market.

The usage of agricultural implements follows the same pattern where the improved and traditional plough co-exist. Pumpset is one single item which has been acquired by over 70 per cent farming families. In contrast, only three tractors have been purchased (the Eicher in 1967, the Escort in 1972 and the Zieter in 1974). After 1969 threshers have got a wider acceptance. There are as many as 12 threshers with Rasoolpur farmers now. Most farmers now use thresher for their Rabi crops even though they may not possess the thresher themselves. In the latter case, they have to pay hire charges to those whose thresher they use for threshing. The use of bullock-cart has declined appreciably. Their number has, consequently, come

5 For example, the Rasoolpur farmers use Bisunparag, Baadshah-pasand, Maaldahi, Laalmati, Kanakjir (traditional) and IR-8 and Jaya (HYV) varieties of paddy seeds. The traditional varieties of wheat in use are Samna, K-68 and the newer ones RR-21 and 1982.

down to 10 in 1979 from 24 in 1947. Even those who have it, use them very nominally, in most cases for transporting manure, produce (including grains and sugar-cane) and participation in marriages. Long range journeys on bullock-cart have almost ceased and alternate modes of transport are now used. The use of animal power too has declined although their number has come down appreciably only in case of the tractor owners. Even with the latter, the two act as complementary (and not alternative) sources of energy use.

Suction of Local Economy in the Wider Environment

Farming in Rasoolpur is no longer concerned only with its own economy : during the last 32 years it has got dovetailed in stages, first with the sub-regional, then with the regional and finally, with the national economy. The national economy, in turn, is integrated with the global economy. This has transformed the basic character of Rasoolpur agriculture and increased its dependence on the industrial sector much to its disadvantage. For both its input purchase and output disposal, it is dependent on outsiders. This dependence has increased with the passage of time as larger number of commercial crops have become popular and agriculture has changed its subsistence character. The Rasoolpur farmer has now to purchase the seed, fertilizer, pesticides and diesel at prices controlled by outsiders. These prices change, not by marginal 5-10 per cent but by margins as high as 50-60, 70-80, 100-150 per cent. The cost of a 20 litre diesel jerrycan paid for

by a majority of Rasoolpur farmers in September-October-November 1979 was between Rs.70-120. On the other hand, the prices of agricultural outputs are determined by the Agricultural Prices Commission, an institution which seems blissfully unaware of these conditions. This Commission decides the rate every year and the governmental procuring agencies i.e. the Food Corporation of India, the Cooperative Marketing Federations, etc. and the private mills (rice, sugar, etc.) are supposed to pay the same to the producers. In reality, however, this system has added another dimension to the exploitation of the Rasoolpur farmer. The cost of wheat was fixed at Rs.115 per quintal in 1978-1979 season and there was a purchasing centre of the FCI at Fatehpur. However, the brokers of the nearby villages, a few trading shylocks of Fatehpur and the conniving officials of the FCI conducted the purchasing operations in such a fashion where the producer was forced to sell the grain to a 'fixer' at Rs.80 a quintal. The 'fixer' and the FCI officials pocketed the difference between them in the ratio of 50:50. This has been going on ever since the FCI has started its operations in Fatehpur and the Rasoolpur farmers can't do much, by way of changing it.

Nor is the story any different in case of sugar-cane and potato, two prominent commercial crops grown in Rasoolpur. Sugar-cane area has, in fact, come down heavily in Rasoolpur

between 1974-1979 because of the inability of the Biswan (Sitapur), Jarwal (Gonda) and Burhwal (Barabanki) sugar mills to lift the offered cane from the Fatehpur centre. The Biswan Cooperative Sugar-cane Union also looks after Fatehpur centre and to which a centre representative is "elected" every year by the sugar-cane producers representatives in every village including Rasoolpur. However, this election is one among many "participatory" tricks through which vested interests perpetuate themselves in key positions. The election has been so stagemanaged that a single person has been Fatehpur representative for more than 15 years. The Biswan Union office-bearers have a working arrangement with the mill-owners which ensures the weighing of sugar-cane supplied by leading farmers on the one hand and low off-take of the stocks of non-entities on the other. The payment of even weighed sugar-cane is another story of organised and brutalized exploitation where the dues of the farmers are not paid for years at a stretch. There is, of course, no problem for those with proper connections. As a backlash to this development, big farmers have started cane-crushers to produce Khandsari. The smaller farmers have reduced the area under sugar-cane.

The potato crop has to be stored in cold-storages located at Barabanki, Chinhath, and Lucknow. These cold-storages belong to the wealthy traders, who use them not as cold-storages for which they have licenses, but as storage godowns of stocks,

major parts of which are not even required to be paid for. The farmers are not allowed storage space in cold-storages. This device earns them fantastic profits. Since 1977-1978 the owners of cold-stores have extracted huge premiums for keeping the potatoes in their stores. Another tendency, which was present even earlier, is the marketing of the stored potatoes without the consent of the concerned customers. What the owners accomplished through these unauthorized deals was sale at high price in the market and lower payment to the producer yielding a fabulous margin. Kirhi Ram, who had kept four truck loads of his potato yield in 1978-1979 at one of the cold-stores in Lucknow, related one more instance of organised cheating indulged in by the cold-storage owners. Kirhi Ram's stock was sold by the owners, but when he himself asked for his stock, a rotten pile was offered to him and he was asked to cough up a sum of Rs.8,580 as 'service charges'. In utter disgust he did not take back even his gunny bags. His loss was in the vicinity of Rs.52,000.

Alternations in the Farming Structure

Another type of structural change observed in Rasoolpur's farming is the gradual alienation of land from the smaller farmers and its centralisation among the bigger families. In 1947, only Kirhi Ram possessed about 250 Kutchha bighas of land (about 50 acres). Between 1953-1971 two other Kurmi families - Chandrabhal and Kripal - have increased their hold-

ings from a meagre 65 and 55 (13 and 11 acres) to 135 and 190 bighas (27 and 38 acres) respectively. Increased cost of inputs and low per unit net return has also forced around 75 per cent of Rasoolpur farmers to be in substantial debts. Until 1955 about 60 per cent farmers were making some net gains through their agriculture. Now farming has become a losing profession for a domineering majority. Why are the farmers continuing in the same line if the profession is not a paying one? The answer, in the words of Shivnandan, a young Rasoolpur farmer, is, "Where else could we go? We have no other choice and we have no one to help us obtain an entry in any other profession. Given help and choice, we would be very glad to move out".

The portents for the future of farming as a profession do not appear too bright in Rasoolpur. This is because of two important developments. First, the younger generation of Rasoolpur farmers, born after 1955 or so and receiving schooling in a developing Fatehpur town and relatively exposed much more to the urban life, is not as much keen in putting physical labour on the farms as the earlier generations. This set wants more of mechanical gadgets which are costly to purchase and operate and require outside help to maintain. Second, the change in the cropping pattern requires larger wage-labour on the farms. Wage-labour of Rasoolpur caters to both Rasoolpur and the neighbouring village, Palpatan. Also, the practice of going to

work at 3 or 4 a.m. in the morning and working late in the nights, so unavoidable in agricultural operations, has almost ceased to exist. As a result, the costs have increased and agricultural operations have to be even more carefully planned. Some trade-offs have been, consequently, worked out which require usage of different strategies. Instead of customary Chaumasa⁶ ploughing, as was the case in 1947, now the plot is irrigated once, ploughed and, then, sown. This has saved labour input but increased costs of other inputs.

VI

Changes in the Social Structure

In discussing changes in the social structure of Rasoolpur, we are primarily concerned here with for forms of structural changes.⁷ In their specifics some of these have already been

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- 6 A Chaumasa plot was generally meant for wheat sowing and left uncultivated for four months during which it was ploughed 7-9 times before sowing was made.
 - 7 Blau (1977 : 118) indicates the following forms of structural changes in the social structures : (a) distribution of the population among social positions may change without changes in the positions themselves (which alters the degree of inequality or heterogeneity in terms of a single parameter); (b) the number of positions delineated by a nominal parameter may change (which alters the degree of heterogeneity); (c) the strength of correlates of parameter may change (which alters the degree to which parameters are intersecting or consolidated i.e. consolidation of status inequalities); (d) the extent to which one form of differentiation is related to another may change (which is not the same as a change of (c) type) i.e. correlation of a society's inequality in education with its income inequalities may decline; and (e) new parameters may appear or old ones disappear (which alters the parameter framework itself) i.e. abolition of private property.

touched upon in the preceding sections : what we are attempting in this section is analysis of metamorphosis in a structural perspective.

Changes in the Composition of Social Positions

The Rasoolpur social structure consisted of six hierarchies of different social positions in 1947. In a descending order these were : (1) big farmers; (2) traders; (3) middle farmers; (4) small farmers; (5) artisans and service class; and (6) landless and wage labour. During the last 32 years, this hierarchical structure has remained intact in so far as the number of hierarchies themselves are concerned (Table 3.4) : however, the composition of the social positions has undergone changes, both in absolute and proportional terms. Only the percentage of big farmers has remained almost constant : the numerical strength of all other hierarchies has altered. The percentages of middle and small farmers and those of artisans and service class have declined somewhat more appreciably. The strength of traders too has come down. The landless and wage labour have, on the other hand, jumped from 19.7 per cent in 1947 to 36.9 per cent in 1979. Decline of artisans and service class coupled with increase of landless and wage labour indicated the operation of process of pauperization.

Table - 3.4

Changes in the Social Positions in Rasoolpur

Social Positions	Frequency and Percentages									
	1947		1951		1961		1971		1979	
	Fre- que- ncy	Per- cen- tage	Fre- que- ncy	Per- cen- tage	Fre- que- ncy	Per- cen- tage	Fre- que- ncy	Per- cen- tage	Fre- que- ncy	Per- cen- tage
1. Big Farmers	1	1.6	1	1.2	2	1.8	3	2.0	3	1.8
2. Traders	17	28.9	21	27.0	29	27.7	36	24.9	42	26.6
3. Middle Far- mers	9	15.2	9	11.5	15	14.2	16	11.0	17	10.8
4. Small Farmers	12	20.4	13	16.6	22	20.9	30	20.8	29	18.3
5. Artisans and Service Class	9	15.2	10	12.9	10	9.6	9	6.2	9	5.6
6. Landless and Wage Labour	11	18.7	24	30.8	27	25.8	51	35.1	58	36.9
Total	59	100.0	78	100.0	105	100.0	145	100.0	158	100.0

Intra-caste Status Alternations

Status emulation and improvement has been considered to be a phenomenon which is operative inter-caste-wise (Srinivas : 1952, 1960, 1962, 1976). In Rasoolpur, however, intra-caste status alterations too have taken place which indicate presence of heterogeneity within the same castes. This tendency is particularly marked among the Kurmis and Chamars. Most Kurmis of Rasoolpur belonged to the Amnaikh variety in 1947 and, consequently, there

was considerable difficulty for them to get their sons married. The entire eastern block of Kurmi families (Chandrabhal, Kallu Ram, Kripal, etc.) were also Amnaikhs and many eligibles among them were unmarried till 1952. Then after the first general election in 1952, Chandrabhal and Kripal families approached a poor Chowdhury among the Gursel group of Zimidars.⁸ This Chowdhury had meagre financial base and was hard put to meet his both ends. He had, therefore, taken to the profitable mode of converting the Amnaikhs to the status of Zimidars. He accepted a down payment and made visits to the families of Rasoolpur converts to initiate the process of legitimation. However, the Chowdhury had been very careful in selecting only such families for conversion as had done - and were doing - well economically and were not an eyesore to his Chowdhury group in Gursel. There was an additional reason for this decision. One of the Chowdhuries was a politician who usually contested assembly elections from the Fatehpur constituency and desperately needed 'vote banks' in as many villages as possible. The politician also welcomed this move since he gained many 'workers' without making any investment. The Rasoolpur families met this requirement well. Chandrabhal family had an influential head who wielded considerable influence in 2-3 villages. The process of legitimation consisted of proving to others, especially those in the marriage market,

8 The Gursel group is among the first three in the Sarhe Baara hierarchy prevalent in the area.

that the Rasoolpur families belonged to the lineage of Gursel Chowdhury families. This was accomplished by shaving off hair at the death of the Chowdhuries by the initiated of Rasoolpur, frequent visits to Gursel⁹ and attendance in other social functions. By 1962 this process had been completed and the Rasoolpur families had graduated to the status of the Zimidars. The arrangement benefitted both the parties in the following ways :

(a) The marriage of sons of Rasoolpur families was no longer a problem. In fact, they were getting sizeable dowry in the seventies. Their gain in ritual status had also brought economic gains.

(b) The politician Chowdhury was very close to the district Congress boss, the late Mahant Jagannath Bukhs Das (of Kotwadham) who was also controlling the Barabanki Zilla Parishad. Through this conduit, a couple of Rasoolpur lads from neo-Zimidar families landed jobs of Primary School Teachers for themselves.

(c) Their greater outside contacts enabled them to acquire lands of several Rasoolpur, Shaikhpur and Fatehpur parties and enabled them to open shops in Fatehpur and purchase land there. In case of Kripal family, this change in their economic status was reflected in the colloquial names given to Kripal

⁹ A cattle market and a fair at Gursel provided easy rationalizations for these journeys.

in different stages of their post-independence existence. First he was called Kripaluwa (1947-1952); then Kripal (1952-1962); afterwards Kripal Singh (1962-1972); and, finally, Kripal Singh Chowdhury (1972-1979).

(d) The Gursel Chowdhuries had taken help of Rasoolpur families in the 1957, 1962, and 1967 elections. They also received help in the organisation of Gursel fair of which they were incharge. Later when one of the Chodhuries opened a medical practioner's shop in Fatehpur, the Rasoolpur crowd ensured supply of enough patients from their 'corridor'.

Among the Chamars, intra-caste status improvement had taken place on the strength of acquisition of economic resources. Badal and Kallu Chamar families had acquired, with the help of Rahi, an orchard and reasonable amount of land which made them more of self-sustaining. Later on when two among the latter family got employment in Railways, their condition improved further. Not much intra-caste ritual status difference existed among the Chamars in 1947. The improvement in the economic condition of the two Chamar families during the sixties added weightage to their ritual prestige in their caste Panchayat and now they act as some kind of 'superiors' among the Chamars.

Decline of Ritual Supremacy

Rasoolpur social structure in 1947 had the Brahmins on the top and the Harijans at the bottom of the pyramidal ritual structure. Three factors have contributed to the decline of importance of ritual supremacy of the Brahmins. First, the capacity to enforce the penal provisions under the Hindu practice and customs is no longer operative. The Rasoolpur Brahmins, led by Balla Pandit, realised it first and tactfully receded into background. Second, several provisions of the Indian constitution on fundamental rights, made well known to the Harijans in particular by Rahi, and the one-man-one-vote electoral system conferred equal political weightage to Rasoolpur residents belonging to Harijan, and backward castes. Third and, more importantly, the economic status of the family enabled to tackle many of the attendant social problems. For Example, it was possible for a Harijan to carry a Baraat in his marriage with the usual paraphernalia with his monetary capacity now : it was not possible to do so in 1947.

The levers of whatever power, which is exercised at the village level, gravitated in the mid fifties to the Kurmis in Rasoolpur. The Kurmis have exercised it in a totally different manner than the Brahmins. Here the exercise of power is based essentially in the economic activities. Of course,

it is not as ruthless and coercive as was the case earlier on. And yet, to those who have to face its onslaught it is unner-ving even in its milder forms.

Dwarfing of Rasoolpur Social Structure

Suction of Rasoolpur economy into the larger economic environ-ment, and increased penetration of outside agencies and offi-cials in to the affairs of Rasoolpur have dwarfed the social structure of the village to a great extent. This is reflected in the declining capacity of Rasoolpur community to decide its own issues and problems. In 1947 as and when a Rasoolpur resident faced the wrath of the village community, there was no way out left for him. He had to lie prostrate before the collective authority structure, take the punishment and get back acceptance. After 1963-1964 this has changed. More than the weakening of the collective authority structure, it is the intervention of outside elements which bolster the deviant behaviour in Rasoolpur now. Even in settling simple succession of land and property, the entire gamut of steps have to be settled outside Rasoolpur, in the courts and outside. To the extent the penetration of outside elements in the social structure of Rasoolpur has increased, the decisive character of its internal structure has shrunk.

Chapter - IV
DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN
RASOOLPUR

Chapter - IV

Development Implications of Changes in Rasoolpur

The nature and direction of changes in Rasoolpur, their causative forces and, to some extent, their consequences were discussed in the preceding chapter. We would now examine their development implications for the social structure of Rasoolpur and other villages in the Fatehpur area. In particular, we would comment on : (a) the directional control of changes in the production system; (b) stagnation and immobility; (c) the trivial nature of available services; (d) increased exploitation via newer organisations; and (e) emergence of a dual society.

The Directional Control of Changes in the Production System

The type of changes which have occurred in the structure of farming in Rasoolpur have inevitably put a squeeze on the local farmer. He has been first induced to accept a technology which produced higher yields with relatively lower costs of inputs. As the time passed, traditional technology, knowledge and skills either got completely ignored or were used less frequently : newer technology gained larger acceptance disrupting the primacy of traditional institutions and relationships.¹ The replacement technology increased his dependence

¹ For an interesting discussion on motives/consequences of replacement of traditional technology, reference might be made to Bell (1979), Howes (1979) and Swift (1979).

on outsiders for both inputs procurement and outputs disposal and left almost no elbow-room for him to exercise many options. Thus, whereas he was forced to bear the entire range of risks and costs, the control of the marketing system by outside forces reduced his capacity to earn a remunerative price for himself. In the emergence of this schema in which the Rasoolpur farmer has been reduced to be a powerless spectator, the directional control of the structural changes in farming has become vested in the external forces and agencies.² These agencies derive ideological initiative from international agencies, foreign governments and multi-nationals in designing and operating the agricultural/rural development programmes. As things stand, unless some counter-measures are taken the Rasoolpur farmer would be easy feed for the numerous vultures sitting in almost every agency having some say or the other in his affairs. The crucial issue then is : whether the Rasoolpur farmers should continue to be at the mercy of external forces? or should steps be taken to free them from the

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2 The narratives of Feder (1978 : 559-72) on the role of agri-business in Latin America and Johnson and Kilby (1975 : 34-75; 299-327) on agriculture and structural transformation in "late developing countries" indicate that this process is world-wide in its character and sweep of coverage.

tentacles of the exploiting agents?³

Stagnation and Immobility

During the last thirty two years, the Rasoolpur population has stagnated. Barring just a few, others are continuing in the same occupational rut. In the absence of new occupational skills and important contacts, entry into new professions/lines has not been possible. The two existing occupations in Rasoolpur, farming and trading, do not have infinite capacity to absorb ever increasing population without affecting their profitability. On their own, the Rasoolpur community is not in a position to start some major economic activity which would provide a break-through, trigger further development, and reduce increasing disparities. The approach of the development agencies so far has relied on 'percolation effect' which is offset by massive leakages operative at different levels. An important poser here is : Is it sufficient to keep on spending out skelton outlays in all the areas? Is it not worthwhile to consider starting need-based economic

3 The peasants around Fatehpur town, including those of Rasoolpur, seem to have already realized this. In September-November 1979, they carried out a fairly sustained localised struggle against the conniving officials of Revenue, Police and Civil Supplies Departments in denying them diesel and perperating atrocities. The successful conclusion of this struggle has made atleast one thing clear to them : organise and fight systematized exploitation by the trader-politician-official combine. Elsewhere too, as De Silva et al (1977, 1979) indicate, this has succeeded in giving back power to the people, power which has been usurped by the organised group of racketeers.

activities with larger allocations and local participation which would benefit the local population in more appreciable manner?

Trivial Nature of Social Services

In the colonial system of government which independent India inherited from the British - and the basic essentials of which remain intact even today - the question of settlement planning has been operationalized only in case of the urban areas.⁴

Perspective planning of bigger villages, which eventually become towns, has not been practiced. As such, villages grow but the social services, which are so essential to determine the quality of life in the villages as elsewhere, do not. In case of Rasoolpur, the village has only one school. For its all other needs it has to depend on public and private services available at Fatehpur at a price sometimes out of reach for a majority of Rasoolpur population.

Medical facilities, for example, are "available" at the Primary Health Centre at Fatehpur. The PHC caters to a total population of over 200 villages with almost negligible medical supplies and thoroughly inadequate nursing and other staff.

4 The forcible rearrangement of physical settlements of border nationalities (like the Nagas in Nagaland) by the Indian army under different Indian Prime Ministers has been an exception to this. However, the motive in going through these exercises has been to gain advantage from military point of view : it has certainly not been rural settlement planning.

The Rasoolpur residents do not even go there : instead, they consult 3-4 qualified doctors, an equal number of quacks, and get treated at considerably higher monetary, time, and other costs. In chronic cases, these Fatehpur practioners send the patients to their favourite private practioners in Lucknow. This story is repeated in case of all other services, including servicing of pumpsets and tractors. The important consideration is : whether the delivery of essential social (i.e. education, health, etc.) and other services should retain its colonial form? Should their location, composition, content, and character not be changed to bring them equitably to all sectors of the society?

Increased Exploitation via Newer Organisations

Government departments such as the Police, Revenue, and Irrigations had been known for their exploitation of the peasantry even in 1947. During the last 32 years a large number of new institutions have come into existence and it is their brutalized use by the officials, the wealthy traders, and the corrupt leaders for their partisan gains which has considerably increased the exploitation of the rural population. Among the institutions introduced in the post-independence period which affect the lives of Rasoolpur population in a significant manner are : the block, the Biswan Cooperative Cane Union, the Land Development Bank, the Corperative Seed Store, the Commercial Banks, and Food Corporation of India, among others.

Ironically enough, each of these institutions has been established with the stated objective of helping the rural population, including that of Rasoolpur. And yet, it is because of their existence that increased exploitation of Rasoolpur population has been taking place openly. The block has fostered the "subsidy culture" among the development bureaucracy. This culture is present in all other foregoing institutions. Under this "arrangement", the officials of concerned agencies take a 'fixed' cut-back either from the beneficiary directly or via the supplier of the equipment/supplies. This has resulted in the escalation of the costs for the beneficiary, (who has to pay back the amount loaned to facilitate purchases) and denial of benefits to those not willing to play according to the 'rules' of this game. This is eating the vitals of developmental agencies: Quite a few organisations now show their increasing unwillingness to carry out such programmes which have no subsidies. It is difficult to change this type of organisational culture of exploitation without altogether changing the organisational goals, values, structures and systems, as for instance, demonstrated by the Amul Milk model, on the one hand and conscientisation and mobilization of the beneficiaries on the other.

There is yet another problem created by newer institutions : quite few among them spend a major portion of total allocation

on their establishments.⁵ Not enough money is left for the actual organisation of programme activities. To the extent the outside officials are assigned development duties and the residents of the concerned rural areas are not trained to assume organisational responsibilities, such problems would continue to baulk the development efforts.

Emergence of a Dual Society

Dualism in Indian society practiced by the British during their rule was atleast not hypocritical : it was quite open and practiced with ruthlessness. After their departure their successors, of all hue and colour, have been publicly preaching socialism. And yet, within Indian society last 32 years have given birth to another type of dualist society. The first part of this society is constituted, at the local level of Fatehpur town and Rasoolpur village, by the Tehsildar, and the Station House Officer (Police), the Medical Officer In-charge of Primary Health Centre, the Manager of the State Bank of India (from the government departments), the leading advocates, medical practioners, the Principals of the local colleges, the managers of all other nationlized banks having branches in Fatehpur, the local M.L.A., the block Pramukh, the Fatehpur representative of Biswan Cooperative Cane Union, (among

5 For an excellent case study of expenditure patterns of development departments in a district of Gujarat, see, for example, Gaikwad and Parmar (1977).

"public" figures) and leading traders of Fatehpur and important "leaders" from many villages. The mass of population constitutes the other half. In so far as the short, medium and long-term needs of the first part are concerned, all the governmental, cooperative, and, private agencies, and individuals have to meet them on priority : there is just no question of non-availability of goods and services to this category. For, they are Mathadheesh (heads of institutions) and enjoy, in their own spheres of influence, almost absolute power and it does not pay to annoy them. Each of these men have, in a systematic way, consolidated this mercenary class by helping and obliging the other and also harassing such individuals and institutions who dared to challenge their "authority" and command.

While the goods and services are available to these privileged people at their will, the same are doled out to the masses at "a price". Extraction of this price from the victims has assumed specific forms in specific departments and institutions and the routes are clearly visible and known to any one who wants to see and enquire them. Over the years this practice has also become accepted by the suffering majority and thus, assumed attitudinal sanction. Thus, the system of organised corruption, bribery and fraud has become an accomplished art, one which is envy of the aspiring young men and topic of satisfied discussion among the elderly people of the deprived mass.

The younger generation of this class attends, in most cases,

the best public schools at Lucknow - and not Fatehpur town -; their women-folk deck themselves with silks, jewellery and the costliest cosmetics; and invariably they end-up putting up palatial mansions in the posh localities of Lucknow or similar cities nearer their home towns/villages; they themselves succeed in depositing, under covered names, impressive sums in 'fixed deposits', and investing in the blue chips on the stock markets; and, of course, their houses are stacked with such items as the car, refrigerator, the stereo system, the Television and stainless steel cutlery. At week-ends, these people visit, quite often at the cost of the public and in their official vehicles, nearest metropolitan towns with their friends and colleagues and "other facilities" are made available to them by those who curry their favour.

This unabashed abuse of power, usurped from the people, has been going on. Not many among the existing political parties want to stop this pernicious division of society. In case of Fatehpur area, which has a creditable record of pre-independence struggles, this system has already been challenged twice during the last three years. The first was the struggle against the Principal of a local College in 1977-1978 and the second against the Tehsildar - Station House Officer and diesel dealers in September-November 1979. The first struggle was lost because of lack of organisational skills. The second, in which a few from Rasoolpur also participated, has just been won.

The important consideration, however, is : whether localized, single-issue, struggles, which tend to divide the oppressed population, organised on a few occasions, would eliminate this system? Or an organisational framework of the exploited would have to be created on a permanent basis to take care of the problems? It would also be incumbent to consider whether the 1950 constitution has not been abused enough as to warrant its scrapping and replacement by one which is somewhat more practical and less bombastic.

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